





IRENE DWEN ANDREWS

9



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

PI-9

TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW
IN IRELAND

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

MEMORIALS OF AN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY
PORTRAIT PAINTER.

HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS IN DONEGAL AND
ANTRIM.

TENNYSON: A CRITICAL STUDY.

THE DECAY OF SENSIBILITY, and other ESSAYS.

THE QUEEN'S CHRONICLER, and other VERSES.

THE REPENTANCE OF A PRIVATE SECRETARY.

THE OLD KNOWLEDGE.

TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW
IN IRELAND

ESSAYS ON IRISH SUBJECTS

BY

STEPHEN GWYNN

DUBLIN

HODGES, FIGGIS, & CO., LTD.

LONDON: MACMILLAN & CO., LTD.

MCMIII

Printed by PONSONBY & GIBBS, Dublin University Press.

OF the Essays in this book, that on 'The Gaelic Revival in Literature' was published in the *Quarterly*, and that on 'Racial Contrasts in Fiction' in the *Edinburgh Review*; those on 'Celtic Sagas,' 'The Revival of a Language,' and 'The Secret of Ireland,' in *Macmillan's Magazine*. The papers entitled 'Three Days in the "Granuaile,"' and 'A Month in Ireland,' appeared in *Blackwood*; that on 'The Irish Peasant,' in the *Saturday Review*; 'Literature among the Illiterates,' in *The Delineator*; while the pages dealing with 'the Gaelic League and the Irish Theatre' are adapted from an article in the *Westminster Gazette*, with extracts from one in the *Fortnightly Review*. My thanks are due to the respective editors for permission to reprint: and I owe it to them to say that none of them must be taken as approving the general tendency of this volume.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
PREFATORY	v
THE GAELIC REVIVAL IN LITERATURE	i
CELTIC SAGAS RE-TOLD	38
LITERATURE AMONG THE ILLITERATES	59
THE REVIVAL OF A LANGUAGE	66
THE GAELIC LEAGUE AND THE IRISH THEATRE	87
THE IRISH PEASANT	97
THE SECRET OF IRELAND	105
SOME RACIAL CONTRASTS IN FICTION	128
THREE DAYS IN THE 'GRANUAILE'	158
A MONTH IN IRELAND	198

PREFATORY

IN republishing these Essays, which the enterprise of an Irish house permits me to offer to readers in collected form, I cannot but feel the too apparent lack of unity both in matter and in manner. And yet I feel by far more strongly that underlying them is a real unity of intention, and more than this, a unity of subject. All of them deal directly with the influences material, intellectual, and spiritual which are to-day at work in Ireland ; though the method varies, according as I write from the standpoint of knowledge, however imperfect, or from that of a journalist's superficial observation. If I have not attempted, nor thought of attempting, to make this bundle of studies into a book, which should be a real 'view of the state of Ireland,' as she is to-day, that is mainly because such a book could only be rightly written by one living and working in Ireland. But here I must guard myself against misapprehension. Till I left college, Ireland was my home ; in the truest sense my home has always been there ; and though I have earned my living for the most part in England, a year has never passed by me of which I did not spend

a month at least in my own country. Moreover, knowledge is a matter of will as well as opportunity, and I have never lacked the desire to see and to learn. It would be unfair therefore to take what I have to say, as it has sometimes been taken by Irish critics, for the remarks of a mere casual visitor.

On another matter, it is as well to be definite, for here also comments in the press have misrepresented my position. I call myself a nationalist. But my nationalism has nothing irreconcilable about it. If Ireland had the status of Canada, I should be as good an Imperialist as Sir Wilfred Laurier. So I believe would nine out of any ten Irishmen who to-day are most bitter against England.

We are treated nowadays to a deal of vague talk about the inevitable tendency towards a merging of small national existences in the strength and the splendour of some larger unity. Where is the justification for this view? I see Russia endeavouring to assimilate Finland, Germany busy stamping out the life of Poland. But since when did Great Britain consciously take Russia or Germany for a model? What I see in the British Empire is a marked strengthening of the distinct life, the individual freedom, of its members: that is the tendency of British Imperialism, everywhere but in Ireland. We are told that we ought not to let the wishes of Irishmen for self-government

endanger the construction of the Imperial edifice — we are lectured about the larger patriotism that should prevail over provincial ideals. But in the Colonies, whose Imperialism is undisputed, no man thinks of consulting Imperial interests before those of his own land. Australia and New Zealand do what is right in their own eyes, as for example in the case of Oriental immigrants, without the least regard to the Empire's convenience. And if the Colonies make a sacrifice for Imperial interests, that is because the Empire has both a material and a sentimental value for the Colonies. When Ireland has the same reasons for being Imperialist, patriotism in Ireland will take on the same aspect.

I do not suppose that any reasonable man will assert that Ireland has gained materially by the Union; and certainly at the time of the Union Ireland never supposed that she would. The Irish Parliament, though it represented only the English element in Ireland, had a clear conception of Ireland's interest, and had to be bribed to betray that interest by voting for the Union. Yet it is not probable that the men who voted for the Union realised how insane a system they were establishing — the reality of bureaucratic administration linked to the pretence of representative institutions. Under such a system no country could have thriven, and Ireland is to-day the eyesore on a flourishing and well-ordered estate: poor, yet

paying a rack-rent—as witness the report on Financial Relations.

We are told, however, that it is a great thing to share in the glory of the British Empire. What sentimental value has the Empire for Ireland? It is essentially a community of free, white nations, in which Ireland only is not free. She is denied the essential right of a free country, the right to arm in her own defence. I cannot understand why Nationalists do not put forward more strongly this aspect of the question. If they are content to profess allegiance to the Crown, they are entitled to claim the right to volunteer. Allegiance to the Crown does not imply allegiance to the Act of Union. To demand an independent legislature is only to demand what has been approved by a British House of Commons, elected *ad hoc*, and cannot therefore be treasonable.

My opinion in the whole matter is based on the belief that similar causes will produce similar results. Admittedly, the Colonies would be discontented and rebellious, if governed as Ireland is governed; and if Ireland were governed as are the Colonies, I believe she would be as loyal to the Empire. Such is presumably the view of the Colonial Premiers who visited England this year under circumstances so gratifying both to England and the Colonies; for every man of them has, we are told, advocated Home Rule for Ireland.

I admit the difficulties. Ireland has a history

which teaches her to hate England, and we are urged not to read it, since there is no use in raking up old grievances. Unless Ireland can sit down and sing contentedly, *Beati possidentes*, 'Blessed is the man in possession,' she had better avert our eyes from the contemplation of her historic claims. That is no counsel to give to men; least of all to the Irish peasants who have within the last twenty years in great measure reconquered their lands. While an injustice is perpetuated, the sufferers will cherish through generations a resentment that seems unreasonable and unchristian to the heirs of the unjust deed; but when once it is rectified, a sense of triumph in the achievement of right replaces the desire to retaliate. Moreover, who supposes that Ireland is blind to the glory of the fabric which individual Irishmen have so greatly helped to build? She sees it now as bound up with her disgrace; she has no part in it as a nation; she is taught to believe that it can only exist upon condition of her relinquishing the claim which she puts forward to be a nation. Change that condition, and you change everything. Lord Beaconsfield, who was a practical statesman, and therefore realised that nations are governed largely by sentiment, once said that Ireland possessed 'the historic sense of true nationality.' He recognised that if Ireland was to be content within the Empire, the Empire must be conciliated with Ireland's claim to be a nation. And yet we are solemnly told that

since the Act of Union Ireland has no more right to separate consideration than Yorkshire or Essex.

The question is in its deepest essence one of sentiments and ideas—sentiments and ideas which have gained strength rather than lost it. Ireland was never so separate from England as she has been since the Imperial demonstration of the Boer war. And yet its practical aspect is bad enough. The more serious the attempt to grapple with material problems in Ireland, the more apparent becomes the vice in the machinery of government, and the evil of the political situation. I think that within the past twenty years a change has made itself felt in the minds of Englishmen. We used to be told that England governed Ireland in sheer kindness to save her from her own ruinous incompetence. Nowadays an idea is abroad that the local interests of Ireland might be quite as well served if Ireland looked after them for herself. The argument against Home Rule is based now solely on the danger to the Empire. On that matter, there is first this to say. As things stand, in the event of a European war, Ireland would be disaffected, and would need a strong garrison, disarmed though she is. If she had the colonial status, I believe that she would have the same motive as the Colonies for coming to the help of the Empire, and would do as they did. In 1780 when Ireland was in feeling, as Pitt said, ‘American to a man,’ Ireland stood perfectly loyal in action. There

might be a risk in granting Home Rule, but boldness is often a better counsellor of prudence than fear.

The concession of Home Rule would alter much in Ireland. A special type of politician has been generated by the conditions which have accustomed the Irish members to power without responsibility, and which have forced them into an attitude of hostility to the law, since reforms could only be had by disorder. Irishmen, who are no fools, would choose a very different class of persons to administer the country from some of those whom they select to fulfil the very peculiar duties of an Irish member at Westminster. The leaders would undoubtedly retain much of their influence, and how many men are there in the House of Commons abler than Mr. Redmond, Mr. Healy, Mr. Dillon, and Mr. Russell—all of them certain to sit in an Irish parliament, and equally certain not to be united in one party? Further, the power of the Roman Church, which to-day can identify itself with the central popular demand, would inevitably find itself in collision with other forces. The priests would try to govern Ireland, no doubt, and the certain result would be a split between Ireland of the country and Ireland of the towns.

Finally, an Ireland under Home Rule would, on my hypothesis, be a country no longer distracted by the land question. England has made the agrarian situation in Ireland, and she is bound to

solve it, in the one way possible. Twenty years ago I think that Ireland could have dealt with the problem in a spirit of justice; but since England has set the example of expropriation without compensation, it is difficult to say how far the precedent would be carried. But to maintain the Union for the sake of the landlords is to sacrifice the true interest of Ireland and of the Empire for the sake of a small class.

Moreover, I think, that class has since the Union deserved very ill both of the Empire and of Ireland. Where they should have mediated, they have promoted misunderstanding. The dominant caste betrayed the interest of Ireland, as they themselves conceived it, in 1800, and from that day onward they steadily deteriorated. Absolved from the necessity of consulting the welfare of Ireland, they steadily consulted their own petty interests and called them the interests of England. They misrepresented, and they still misrepresent, every popular movement in Ireland, setting down to the pernicious influence of mercenary agitators and local ruffians every natural and legitimate claim for a measure of justice.

They have persistently traduced the character of the Irish representatives, men who whether wisely or unwisely, rightly or wrongly, have served Ireland without the hope or chance of pecuniary reward. Though they were kind to the people whom they governed, they resented with a bitter

contempt any attempt in the governed classes to rise to their social level or to claim a voice in the management of affairs. In all other ways, I do not think there has been a class in Europe more honourable, more courteous, more kindly, more lovable, and in this I know that they have been simply blinded by an inveterate prejudice. I take them as the lamentable example of what comes to pass when local patriotism is replaced by a conception of Imperial interests so vague that it can always be filled up in detail to fit personal advantage. Their patriotism has been on a par with the patriotism of capitalists on the Rand.

Their prosperous day is now over, and their place in a measure knows them no more. Local administration has passed into other hands. Their occupation as landowners will probably soon be gone, and they may possibly disappear as a class from the country. If they do it will be an irreparable loss. As the 'English garrison' they did in my judgment nothing but harm. As Irishmen, if they are content to be simply Irishmen and serve Irish interests, there is no class that can do so much good, for there is none that possesses so much education and so much character. Many of them take the change in sullenness; but there are some, no less constant to the Union, who show a very different example. The Irish Agricultural Organisation Society has done a great work for Ireland, and it owes its

inception and its continuance to men of the landlord class.

But whoever wishes to serve Ireland, and more especially under the distractions which at present beset her, will have no easy task. The best hope lies in Curran's saying that Ireland will never be rotten till she is ripe, and ripe she certainly is not. But there are fruits that wither from lack of sap to fill them, and Ireland is in grave danger of this sort. Her lassitude is the lassitude of anæmia; she has been drained for so long, that she is, in Bismarck's savage phrase, *saignée à blanc*; and she has bled not at the pocket, but from the very veins. Her intellectual life has been starved by a teaching that led her to despise and neglect the past from which the present must be always fed. Her physical life has been ruinously depleted. Emigration has been preached as a panacea, in a way worthy of the mediæval doctors with their bloodletting. A change has come over men's attitude on this matter, but certainly none too soon. I do not underrate the difficulties, moral and physical, but I recognise the value of the new remedies that are being applied.

The object of this book is to induce people in Ireland to think of what is being done, what can be done, in Ireland for Ireland. Half of the pessimism, so characteristic of the country, is rooted and grounded in intellectual laziness; and if I can stimulate even so much curiosity as shall

persuade a few readers, not already conversant with such matters, to read and see for themselves what exists of Irish literature, ancient and modern; to consider what the Gaelic League signifies, and what it is doing; to study the industrial revival, and such documents as the Recess Committee's Report or the admirable work on 'Ireland Industrial and Agricultural' recently published by the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction; then my book however slight and superficial will have amply justified its existence.

A word may be added as to the order of the Essays: I put last what seems to me of less vital moment, the Industrial Revival. There is a moral side to it, the fostering of self-help, which is invaluable; but when all is said, Ireland needs rather the development of a general than of a merely commercial intelligence. The true model for Ireland among the countries of Europe is not Switzerland, the nursing mother of waiters and hotel-keepers, but Denmark, which has produced the best dramas and the best butter, of recent times.



THE GAELIC REVIVAL IN LITERATURE

THE stream of modern English literature is a big water; but ever since Macpherson produced his work—which, whether good or bad, genuine or spurious, affected the mind of Europe, colouring even Napoleon's bulletins—English literature has shown a perceptibly Celtic tinge. The Celt has afforded a subject to many writers: Celtic imagination and Celtic thought have appeared as contributory forces in many books. Even Tennyson, English as Shakespeare, in his most popular poems worked on a Celtic basis; but it is fair to say that the Arthurian legends, as they left his hand, were made into something entirely British, in the modern acceptance of that word. There remains in them little enough that is distinctively Celtic, and no element that is distinctively Welsh. Nor, it may be said at once, has Wales, as Wales, contributed appreciably to English literature. Mr. Meredith, by common consent head of those who write in English to-day,

is Celt and Welshman, but he is the Celt become cosmopolitan. A Celt may recognise the Celt in him ; the Englishman may feel, and probably does feel, in his work an element that is bewildering and alien. But he has no place in the movement of which it is our business to write, for that movement is in its essence a vehement reaction against cosmopolitanism, a protest against the confounding of differences. And the most resolute form of that protest is to be found in the national life of Wales.

For reasons not easily disentangled, the Celts in Wales have remained aloof, unchallenged and unchallenging. They have sufficed for themselves. Their men of genius have been content to work for the smaller and more responsive audience ; and the result has justified them. In Scotland the Celtic speech and tradition are slowly perishing, and with them the people, their repositories. In Ireland ten years ago the same might have been asserted with even greater assurance. But in Wales the Celtic race and Celtic speech are to-day more prosperous, more strongly rooted in the soil than they were a century ago ; and an hour spent over Mr. Edmund Jones's translations from ' Welsh Lyrics of the Nineteenth Century ' will show why Wales has contributed little to English literature, and to the Celtic revival. The Welsh poets have produced their work for their own use, not for export ; and it would seem that they have produced chiefly in lyrical verse, which is of all literary forms the most difficult to transfer into another tongue. In the most characteristic and popular form of modern

creative work, prose fiction, the Welsh, we are told, have done little or nothing; and, with the exception of Mr. Watts Dunton's 'Aylwin,' it is not easy to recall a book in which any considerable novelist has based his work on Welsh life.

In Scotland and Ireland the case was very different. From the first years of the century in which the novel began to dominate all other forms of literature, novelists turned eagerly for subjects to the Scottish and Irish Gael. But in how different a spirit they regarded those two kindred peoples, may be readily seen by a comparison of Scott's work with those stories of Miss Edgeworth's to which he owed the suggestion for 'Waverley.' When Miss Edgeworth wrote, she had all about her an Ireland still Irish-speaking, but in which the old order and tradition were shattered; an Ireland lying as if in paralysis, vegetant rather than alive; and she wrote of the Celtic Irish with the keen and not unkindly insight that a good mistress possesses into the virtues and foibles of her servants. Once or twice, as, for instance, in 'Ormond,' she endeavoured to portray some survival of the old Celtic nobility; and King Corny is perhaps as well represented as he could have been by one who knew nothing of the history, language, and literature of his race. Miss Edgeworth was probably as good a patriot as many of the Protestants who opposed the Union, or in any other way defended the cause of Ireland against England; but the Ireland of which she thought, and for which they laboured, was a community

with interests dating back at furthest to the plantation of Ulster. For all that gave significance and value to the history of the Irish Celt, for all his heritage from the past, she and they cared nothing.

Miss Edgeworth was an Irishwoman, not a Celt; and Scott was a Scotsman, not a Celt; but what a difference between the two cases! The Scotland to which Scott belonged had a separate history, closing with the day when it gave a king to England. The Scots which his characters spoke, and which affected deeply his own style, was a dialect that had been used for literature as long as the kindred form south of the Border; and a Scottish monarch had been among Chaucer's followers. The great nobles of Scotland were chiefs of the Highland clans, and they cherished the Gaelic in a sentimental affection along with the pipes and the tartans; Scott's ideal auditor, Lady Louisa Stuart or the chief of his own clan, did not need to be told how much poetry was held in the Highland tradition. If Scott was not a Celt, at least that far-reaching sense of the past, that tenderness for lost causes, which are the Celt's, were Scott's also. And so the Celt, who came from Miss Edgeworth's pencil a droll, disorderly, affectionate, pathetic creature, was painted by Scott in the spirit of romantic tragedy; for the conception that obtains in life obtains also in literature. The Gael in Scotland was always and everywhere a decorative accessory, encouraged in his pride of race by leaders and representatives,

who, if they lost the tongue, at least kept the tartan. In Ireland he was by turns the rebel and the serf, his tongue despised, his history ignored or spat upon. And yet it is to Ireland that we must trace the revival of the distinctively Celtic spirit—of the Celtic mind, not as a theme, but as a contributory force.

For Scott himself, and still more those who imitated him, looked at the Celtic life from the outside. It is evident enough that in 'Waverley,' Scott relied rather on the obviously romantic material afforded to his pen by the last struggle of the clans than on that intimate knowledge which he possessed of Lowland character; and his true strength revealed itself, as it were, by accident. For, admirable as are many strokes here and elsewhere in his delineation of the Highlander, Bailie Nicol Jarvie and the old Baron are creatures more fully created, more affluent in the sap of life, than all the Evans and Donalds, to say nothing of the Ferguses and Floras. Scott guesses at the Celts; he invents them to the best of his wonderful ability; but the others spring up in his brain by some process of natural generation, fed from his own sources. All his sympathy, all his insight, do not prevent him from writing of the pure Celt as a foreigner, seen and known only in his collision with the familiar Lowland types, studied with a continual suggestion of contrast, and for the benefit of an alien audience. The importance of Irish literature in the history of the movement is that in Ireland Celtic subjects were first treated in English

for a public presumed to be, at least, in racial and historic sympathy, a public of Celts.

It was not so from the beginning. Moore, a genuine Celt, was the first to reproduce in English song something of the true Celtic poetry, the complex and varied structure of Celtic verse. The fact that he was the first, rather than the value of his achievement, accounts for the enthusiasm with which Irishmen accepted him as the national poet—a mistake that has led to misconception ever since. For Moore's productions were essentially light and shallow; compositions arranged for the temperature of London drawing-rooms; perhaps as good as things of their kind can be, but of a kind inevitably tainted with insincerity. Yet Celtic they were, and at a time when the distinctively Celtic spirit was at its lowest ebb. The recognised champions of Ireland, from Swift to Grattan, had been men divorced entirely from the Celtic tradition. O'Connell himself, the very voice of the Irish Celt, fluent in Irish as in English, wished that the language were extinct, and was strangely ignorant of all that lay in the past of his race. Men of genius who arose among the peasants, the Banims and Carleton, wrote with no sense of anything but the lamentable and inglorious present of their people. Carleton, indeed, as disreputable a personality as ever dishonoured a great gift, sold his religion for cash down, and began his literary career in the columns of a proselytising paper with caricatures of his own folk, till success enabled him to change to a more congenial partisanship.

But in Carleton's pages and those of the Banims (men of less talent but infinitely more honourable record) there is preserved a picture of the Celtic Irish peasantry (or rather of the blended race that included in parts no little strain of Cromwellian blood) as vivid as need be wished for; but a picture, for all that, inadequate as literature. These men, in writing English, handled a tool of whose delicacies they knew nothing; they worked in a literary form strange to their inherited culture; and they wrote always with an eye on the wrong audience, the audience that needed explanations and justifications by the way. They were Celts; the Celt was their subject; but the reader whom they thought of was an English tourist; and this false attitude of mind threw their work, so to say, out of focus. Nevertheless, for a presentment of the Irish Celt as he was before the famine came, sweeping away in swathes the speakers of the old tongue, and convincing those who remained that 'God Almighty was turned Englishman,' Carleton and the Banims are the writers we must look to.

Miss Edgeworth has had her successors, some of them notable, from Lever to the clever ladies whose infinitely diverting 'Recollections of an Irish R.M.' have increased the gaiety of nations. All this literature is thoroughly Irish, stamped with the character of the class from which its writers come—that of the landowners and professional men; and no characteristic of that class is more universal than a deep ignorance and indiffer-

ence respecting the history of the country in which they reside—or do not reside. They, too, look back at a glorious past; but the date of that past is somewhere in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. From Celtic history and Celtic tradition they are entirely divorced; and no wonder, since probably even the head of the O'Briens or the head of the Geraldines has scarcely more imaginative sympathy with the older story of Ireland than the descendants of Cromwell's general or James's investing baronet.

The melancholy thing about this literature of the peasant novelists is that, by its very existence, it shows the decay of the life which it strove to represent. The contemporaries and equals of Carleton in Wales, Islwyn and the rest, were already writing that cultured and thoughtful verse of which some image may be found in Mr. Jones's excellent translations. If Carleton wrote in English, it was because the Irish had come to believe that English was the proper medium of expression for educated Irishmen. That belief was carefully fostered by Archbishop Whately and his Board of Education, with its schools where Irish boys and girls were taught the history of any other country except their own, any language except that which they and their ancestors had spoken; where the very rudiments of reading, writing, and ciphering were imparted in the 'language of civilisation,' unfamiliar and even unknown to the learners, with the result that illiteracy became widespread in a people whose respect for book-learning is to this

day positively pathetic. With the Irish tongue were bound to go all the old stories, the old songs, and even the old dances; the ban of civilisation was on them. And the intellectual and spiritual life of the Irish Celts, cut off from its past, withered as would a plant severed from the root. Neither Carleton nor the Banims realised the mischief that was in progress; they had the peasant's limited intellectual outlook; but their abler contemporaries realised the truth, and from the Young Ireland party dates in reality the Gaelic revival. Not one of the Young Irelanders was a natural Irish speaker; but, nationalists in the best sense, they perceived the vital importance to a nation of continuity with the past. Their number included two poets; and rather to the Conservative official, Ferguson, than to the revolutionary Mangan, is due the allegiance of all who strive to keep living and fruitful the spiritual heritage of the Gael.

A race survives, not only in the flesh, but also in the record of its history, and still more in its moulded thoughts, its embodied dreams. Just as, to understand the peasant, to see him as he should be seen, you must see him at work in a field with the landscape about and beyond him; so, to understand the existing individuals of a race, you must see them against the background of their past, and in the environment that age after age has created out of raw nature. The metaphor, after the fashion of metaphors, is no doubt inadequate. Take an Irishman or an Englishman; set him down upon the tilled land of another country;

and he is at once possessor of all that labour has put into the ground. But you cannot take the foreigner, set him down in the middle of English literature and English thought and say, 'This is yours: enter in, possess.' It will not be fruitful for him as for the heir of the race who made it. To each race its own heritage, which may be endlessly enriched by borrowing, as the Romans borrowed from Greece. But if men cut themselves off from their own traditions, forswearing their past, then comes on them the spiritual barrenness that made of Romanised Gaul and Spain *nutricula causidicorum*, producing at best rhetoricians like Seneca and Lucan.

Thomas Davis, and certain among his associates, insisted on the truth that if Ireland were to be a nation it must be conscious of its past. The politicians among them had little time for research; further back than the struggle of Ireland against conquest they did not care to look. But Ferguson, scholar and poet rather than politician, went back to the primitive literature, holding that it would prove, like all primitive literatures, a quarry from which to hew the material of poetry. Mr. W. B. Yeats (in an essay contributed to the 'Treasury of Irish Poetry') has argued that Ferguson did a service to literature at large:

Modern poetry grows weary of using over and over again the personages and stories and metaphors that have come to us through Greece and Rome, or from Wales and Brittany through the Middle Ages, and has found new life in the Norse and German legends. The Irish legends, in popular tradition and in old Gaelic literature, are

more numerous and as beautiful, and alone among great European legends have the beauty and wonder of altogether new things. May one not say, then, without saying anything improbable, that they will have a predominant influence in the coming century, and that their influence will pass through many countries?

Every one will admit that for men of Irish or Highland stock, these legends, associating themselves with the home of the race, must have a strong charm. But a literature dealing with epic or mythological subjects depends largely for its success on finding an audience familiar, at least in outline, with the groundwork of the story; and the way of pioneers is hard to travel. Mr. Yeats's own work can only be fully enjoyed by those to whom Manannan's name evokes its associations as readily as Thor's, and Deirdre's fatal beauty is as familiar as Swanhild's. There are not many readers, proportionately speaking, who have this knowledge; but when Ferguson wrote, they were many times less numerous, and it is little to be wondered at that he found slight acceptance. Yet even if the day foretold by Mr. Yeats should arrive, when the Celtic mythology is as widely familiar as the Norse has within the last half-century become, Ferguson, with all his talent, will scarcely find readers. Professor Dowden has acutely observed that he is an eighteenth-century poet born out of due time; and the spirit of the *sæculum rationalisticum* is strangely out of place among those legends. 'Conary,' the finest of his poems, is a masterpiece of narration, severe and almost colourless in expression, but stamped throughout with the impress of

a virile personality, breathed through with the airs of the sea. The poet adheres loyally to the traditional legend, which tells how the magical intervention of unknown powers brought punishment on the brave and wise king, who, in pursuing the welfare of his kingdom, disregarded the 'geasa,' or taboo, laid on him by tradition; but in his adherence he is plainly reluctant. With a great effort he conceives of a world where men may be so devil-driven, but he conceives it as a world of outspoken rebellion against 'this tyranny of gaysh and sidh'—of taboo¹ and demon-people. Yet these legends were shaped by men who accepted 'geasa' and 'sidh' as part of the natural order; and it is a question whether this store of tradition can ever be rightly handled and re-shaped except by writers like Mr. Yeats and Fiona Macleod, to whom the marvellous is no marvel but merely the outbreak of omnipresent though unrecognised forces.

Still, there the legends are; and there is no doubt of the beauty and dramatic power of many passages in such tales as the Fate of the Sons of Usnach, or the Wanderings of Diarmuid and Grania. It is only right in considering them to remember how much in the Greek epics, or the Norse, we automatically dismiss from our minds as in reality puerile and unworthy: what we remember is the element of imperishable interest—forms moulded with the large vigour of the world's youth; and to

¹ Is it not curiously significant that we should need to use a Polynesian term in explaining a conception perfectly familiar to every Irish speaker?

these our later poets turn instinctively in the desire to push away drama to the distance at which action becomes symbolic, and passes from the plane of ordinary occurrence. Thus the first achievement of the Gaelic revival was to enrich the common store of poetic material by an unexhausted mythology, which must have for poets or lovers of poetry of Celtic race the same special fitness that Scandinavian myth and legend have for Ibsen and Wagner.

Ferguson's interest was merely in the epic literature of his country; and from that he transferred into English verse much of the substance but little of the spirit. Very different from his terse and measured periods was the work of his contemporary Clarence Mangan, a student also of Irish literature, but chiefly of the lyrical poetry which took shape in Ireland after the Norman invasion. It was his special achievement to reproduce in English the spirit and something of the manner which distinguish this poetry. To hear Irish verse spoken by a good reciter is a very odd experience for the ear accustomed to English poetry. Rhyme is probably an invention of the Gaelic singers; diffused throughout Europe by the Latin compositions of Celtic monks; but rhyme for the Gael is a matter of assonance, not of consonance—'room,' for example, being a rhyme to 'mood.' The Gaelic ear delights in echoes; and this assonance, helped out by alliteration, is profusely strewn through the poems, or rather distributed on elaborate and intricate systems;

but the English ear is baffled continually by the imperfect recurrence of the expected sound. The rhythm, too, is by far less emphatic; you seldom hear in Gaelic verse the precise beat of syllables, dressing into their place by a hair's breadth like soldiers on parade. Replace the Gaelic rhymes by English ones, especially when the rhymes are double, and you have such a jingle of 'beaming' and 'gleaming,' 'dancing,' 'entrancing,' as Moore's followers too often perpetrated.

It is the distinction of Mangan that he reproduced in English something of the Irish melody—that music of the wind which is heard throughout the Gaelic poems. Resembling Poe in many luckless traits of character, he resembled him also in a strange technical dexterity with verse. Rhyme presented no difficulty to him. In one of his finest poems, nine quatrain stanzas are composed on a single terminal, the refrain, 'It is gone on the wind.' Wholly different from this profusion of rhyme which marks his own compositions, is the metrical system employed by him in adapting from Irish originals. For instance, he has rendered the dirge written by Owen Ward, who followed his master the great Earl of Tyrone into exile at Rome, and there had occasion to compose the lament over princes and chieftains dead, not in victory, nor even in glorious disaster, but victims to sickness and home-longing, and buried in a strange land; and, in rendering it, Mangan is studious to deaden all resonance of the rhyme. Still more essentially

characteristic, and indeed scarce to be reconciled with English idiom and the conventions of English verse, is his version of O'Hussey's 'Ode to the Maguire,' (the chief out 'on his keeping,') of which I transcribe some stanzas :—

'Through some dark wood, 'mid bones of monsters, Hugh now
strays :

As he confronts the storm with anguished heart, but manly
brow,

Oh ! what a sword-wound to that tender heart of his were
now

A backward glance at peaceful days !

But other thoughts are his—thoughts that can still inspire

With joy and an onward-bounding hope the bosom of
MacNee—

Thoughts of his warriors charging like bright billows of the
sea,

Borne on the wind's wings, flashing fire. . . .

But though frost glaze to-night the clear dew of his eyes,

And white gauntlets glove his noble fine fair fingers o'er,

A warm dress is to him that lightning garb he ever wore,

The lightning of the soul, not skies.

Hugh marched forth to the fight—I grieved to see him so depart :

And lo ! to-night he wanders frozen, rain-drenched, sad,
betrayed :

But the memory of the lime-white mansions his hand has laid
In ashes, warms the hero's heart.'

Judged by the eye, not by the ear, this looks like prose ; but read it aloud, and the mastery of metre becomes apparent, though the effect which it produces is the broken and wandering yet governed cadence of Irish verse, rather than the insistent stress of our English rhythms ; even the

device of alliteration, as in the second and third stanzas, being strangely subtilised.

The most casual study of the latter work of this school will show how the same tendency manifests itself in whatever becomes impregnated with the Celtic spirit. Mr. Yeats, a deliberate artist if ever there was one, has deliberately moved away from the accepted English conceptions of stress and metre. The verses of Fiona Macleod show the same effort, as it were, to baulk the ear of what it has been trained to expect; to break the recurrence, to introduce a more plangent melody, to catch, as I have said already, something of the wind's music. And with this unexpectedness of rhythm they introduce also the sudden and violent metaphor—like Mangan's or O'Hussey's 'wounding wind that burns as fire'—and they draw their metaphor from the same sources of untamed nature. In brief, the Gaelic revival derives from Ferguson, in so far as it means a return to the primitive or mediæval monuments of Celtic imagination, and from Mangan, in so far as it means an adoption of what is transferable in the Gaelic style and technique.

Of those who, like Ferguson, handled again the themes of Celtic legend without catching much if anything of Celtic style or Celtic spirit, the most notable is Aubrey de Vere, whose recent death has snapped the one link remaining between present-day poetry and the Lake school. Yet the disciple of Wordsworth is astray among those fierce primitive emotions—he would never have

known what warmed the Maguire's heart on the snow-drifted mountain; and the things of his that should survive are poems like the noble sonnet on 'Sorrow,' which any English-speaker might have written. Dr. R. D. Joyce made a blank-verse poem of Deirdre's fortunes, which helped to diffuse knowledge of the legend; and more was done in the same way by another scholar, his brother, Dr. P. W. Joyce, whose 'Old Celtic Romances'—a rich quarry for Mr. Yeats and others—make a very attractive volume of prose tales.

The work of these men, though inferior by far in accomplishment to that of Aubrey de Vere, yet exceeded it in value, for it rested on a knowledge of the tongue and its documents; and the same may be said of Dr. Sigerson's contribution to the movement. His 'Bards of the Gael and Gall' is an anthology of nearly a hundred and fifty Irish poems, metrically translated, 'covering the ground,' says Dr. Hyde, 'from the earliest unrhymed chant ascribed to the first invading Milesian, down to the present days of the eighteenth century.' In many cases Dr. Sigerson has reproduced, not only the sense, but the metre of the original; and no man could do that without sacrificing the poetic quality of his result. But the book is of extraordinary interest to those who wish for an idea of what Irish poetry is in its substance. The same may be said of Dr. Hyde's own versions of the love-songs which he has collected among the Connaught peasantry; but Dr. Hyde has an importance in the history of

the Gaelic revival very different from that of a purveyor of translations. A creative artist of no ordinary merit, he has chosen, like the Welsh poets, to write for his own people in their own tongue; he has also done more than any one man to bring into being an educated public, which can read what he and others may write, as well as what has in the past been written, in Gaelic. But, from the point of view of one chronicling the growth in English of a literature dealing with Celtic subjects in a Celtic spirit, Dr. Hyde has principally to be considered as the author of the 'Literary History of Ireland'—a work which renders it inexcusable for any educated Irishman to be wholly ignorant of the literary traditions of his race.

In this brief review of those whose work has contributed to render accessible to English readers the Celtic tradition—rendering intelligible also the background and environment in which the Celt of Ireland should be seen—mention must be made, however perfunctorily, of the scholars, like Mr. Standish Hayes O'Grady—whose 'Silva Gadelica' may stand beside O'Donovan's translation of the 'Annals of the Four Masters'—and of the collectors of folk-lore, from Crofton Croker to Mr. William Larminie, unhappily dead before his time. Without all this mass of work to rely on, Mr. Yeats and the lesser writers who, like him, treat of Ireland's past rather than of her present, would have little to go upon; for, unlike the two representatives of the Scottish Gael, Miss Fiona Macleod and Mr. Neil

Munro, Mr. Yeats and his fellows speak English only.

I turn aside for a moment from the larger field of modern Irish fiction and poetry, to notice here these two Scottish writers, very remarkable, if only because they present, in its extreme development, what is taken to be the Celtic spirit. About this there is, perhaps, some misconception. Dr. Hyde deplores again and again the fact that the tongue survives only in poor and outlying districts; in prosperous Munster and Leinster, once the centres of Irish song and story, the language is gone, the songs and stories are heard no more; and of those that once passed from hand to hand in manuscript, there survives only a small fraction. The life that would, in the natural course, be reflected in that literature would be a way of existence very different from that of the fisherman or cottier whose hut crouches huddled in some nook between a hill and the Atlantic; the whole range of metaphor would be altered. In a word, the Gael of Scotland, as Miss Macleod and Mr. Munro study him, is not a normal, but an exceptional type of his race, lingering on the confines of what was once his kingdom, and extremely limited in his interests and occupations. This may account for the heavy shadow of melancholy that hangs over the work of both these authors; it accounts certainly for the continual suggestion in both of all the voices of loneliness—the sough of the sea, the wind on the moor, the sighing of the pines, the bark of the seal, the yelp of the eagle.

All this appeals especially to the soul of the Celt, with his preference for the beauty of the untilled land ; yet the lowing of the oxen and bleating of the flocks should be heard in his music. In one sense, these survivals of Celtic life are quintessentially Celtic ; they are as far removed as possible from what is essentially English. But in another sense they only convey a weak dilution of the full Celtic life and culture as it was in the days when a bard sang for opulent and lavish princes, or even of the day when hedge-schoolmasters, paid by well-to-do farmers, kept alive in the pasture-lands of Munster the Ossianic tradition. But all this does not affect the value of these contributions to English literature. Miss Macleod and Mr. Munro find excellent subjects : for among these folk, whether they dwell on moor or loch, in mountain-glen or island, there lingers an ancient poetry, expressing itself through the poets of whom Miss Macleod writes, or the pipers so dear to Mr. Munro. The latter, indeed, turns his eye back for the most part : he hardly comes nearer the present than the closing days of the Peninsular veterans treated in ' Gilian the Dreamer.' His imagination harks off to the Jacobite risings, and to the period of internecine war, when ' bloody knives made a march-dyke between the tartans ' ; though in the first, and perhaps the best, sketches in the first and perhaps the best of his books—' The Lost Pibroch ' and ' Boboon's Children '—he is writing of what might be happening to-day. Here is the description of blind Paruig playing the ' Lost Tune ' :—

He put his pipe up again, filled the bag at a breath, brought the booming to the drones, and then the chanter-reed cried sharp and high.

‘He’s on it,’ said Rory in Gilian’s ear.

The groundwork of the tune was a drumming on the deep notes where the sorrows lie.—‘Come, come, come, my children, rain on the brae and the wind blowing.’

‘It is a salute,’ said Rory.

‘It’s a strange tune anyway,’ said Gilian, ‘listen to the time of yon!’

The tune searched through Half Town and into the gloomy pine-wood; it put an end to the whoop of the night-hag and rang to Ben Bhreac. Boatmen deep and far on the loch could hear it, and Half Town folks sat up to listen.

Its story was the story that’s ill to tell—something of the heart’s longing and the curious chances of life. It bound up all the tales of all the clans, and made one tale of the Gael’s past. Dirk nor sword against the tartan, but the tartan against all else, and the Gaels’ target fending the hill-land and the juicy straths from the pock-pitted little black men. The winters and the summers passing fast and furious, day and night roaring in the ears, and then again the clans at variance, and warders on every pass and on every parish.

Then the tune changed.

‘Folks,’ said the reeds, coaxing. ‘Wide’s the world and merry the road. Here’s but the old story and the women we kissed before. Come, come to the flat lands rich and full, where the wonderful new things happen and the women’s lips are still to try!’

‘To-morrow,’ said Gilian in his friend’s ear, ‘to-morrow I will go jaunting to the North. It has been in my mind since Beltane.’

‘One might be doing worse,’ said Rory; ‘and I have the notion to try a trip with my cousin to the foreign wars.’

The blind piper put up his shoulder higher and rolled the air into the *crunluadh breabach* that comes prancing with variations. Pride stiffened him from heel to hip, and hip to head, and set his sinews like steel.

That is a fine resonant piece of English, apart from its high quality of intellectual and emotional suggestion. Mr. Munro’s writing always has the brag or the wail of the pipes in it. But it is open

to the criticism, here as always, that it lacks sobriety, that it parades an artifice. Perhaps it is only the more Celtic on that account. Early literatures are always overloaded with mannerisms; take, for example, the conventional phrases in Homer, or the verse interspersed in Icelandic sagas. But, unlike the Iceland saga-men, and unlike Herodotus, the Celts, when they told a story in prose, told it with all manner of rhetorical amplification. No literature was ever more self-conscious; and naturally, since, from the earliest recorded times, bards and historians were a distinct and privileged class, whose interest it was to make of literature a craft and a mystery. The highly-wrought passages which Miss Macleod puts into the mouth of Gaelic peasants are probably not out of place, for the pure Celt is everywhere a lover and a student of words; and in these remote western isles, whether of Ireland or Scotland, he preserves an astonishingly rich vocabulary.

Between the two kindred peoples there are numberless resemblances, but one notable difference. The religion, which in either case is passionately cherished, and in either case holds in it many survivals of pagan belief, is in Ireland Catholic, in Scotland a gloomy Calvinism. Certain tales in the 'Washer of the Ford' spring, seemingly, from a gentler Catholic tradition; and one of the best, the 'Annir-Choille,' is thoroughly in keeping with the spirit of the mediæval Church. But the most characteristic part of Miss Macleod's work is that which shows the grimness of Calvin-

ism adding a horror to the immemorial beliefs. Take 'The Sin-eater.' There is a man dead—Adam Blair—and he has little chance of heaven. But if a stranger should be found to eat of the bread that is laid on the lips of the corpse, taking it with warm lips off the cold ones, and of the salt that is laid on the breast, and to take on himself, with them, the sins of the corpse, then the sins may be taken away. The stranger who comes, Neil Ross, is no stranger, but one wronged by the dead man; and he takes the sins on him in the belief that he can throw them into the sea, where they will be turned to demons and harry the soul till judgment-day. He goes through the ugly business, and, facing the world, finds himself looked at askance for a scapegoat. Hours later a shepherd finds him brooding by the road, and, recognising him, tells him that 'Sin-eater should not be a man with a hidden lump in his pack'—that is, with a criminal secret—else there will be no shaking off the sins for him. Neil Ross is angered, but the shepherd will not quarrel.

'No, no, it is rather warning you I would be.'

'And for what?'

'Well, well, just because of that laugh I heard about.'

'What laugh?'

'The laugh of Adam Blair that is dead.'

Neil Ross stared, his eyes large and wild. He leaned a little forward. No word came from him. The look that was on his face was the question.

'Yes; it was this way. Sure, the telling of it is just as I heard it. After you ate the sins of Adam Blair, the people there brought out the coffin. When they were putting him into it, he was as stiff as a sheep dead in the snow, and just like that, too, with his eyes wide

open. Well, some one saw you trampling the heather down the slope that is in front of the house, and said, "It is the Sin-eater!" With that, Adam Blair sneered, and said, "Ay, 'tis the scapegoat he is!" Then, after a while, he went on: "The Sin-eater they call him; ay, just so; and a bitter good bargain it is, too, if all's true that's thought true!" And with that he laughed, and then his wife that was behind him laughed, and then . . .'

'Well, what then?'

'Well, 'tis Himself that hears and knows if it's true! But this is the thing I was told. After that laughing there was a stillness and a dread. For all there saw that the corpse had turned its head and was looking after you as you went down the heather. Then, Neil Ross, if that be your true name, Adam Blair that was dead put up his white face against the sky, and laughed.'

The end of the story is brooding madness by the shores of a wild sea; and it is noticeable how often that tragic conclusion recurs in these stories. Allowing, as one is bound to, for Miss Macleod's bent to the overstrained and the shrill note of insanity—a bent which vitiates her work—the deduction is fair that on the Celtic temperament Calvinism acts terribly. Everywhere—in Brittany, in Wales, in Scotland, in Ireland—the race is dominated by religion as perhaps no other European race, certainly none of Western Europe, can be said to be. But the Catholic faith that lends itself so easily to a myth-making imagination, and offers many paths between the grim alternatives of acceptance or rejection, seems to blend more happily with the Celt's temperament, easily elated, easily depressed, easily driven into the ecstasy of despair.

The writer who most readily offers an Irish parallel to Fiona Macleod is Miss Lawless; but

the contrasts are more remarkable than the resemblances. Miss Lawless has written of the Celts as she knows them, in a region not less remote than the scenes of Miss Macleod's work, whether in the desolation of the Burren or the still more completely insulated barrenness of Aran; and she also sees in religious preoccupations the governing factor of their lives. But religion with her people is the solace, the soothing hand, never the torture. It may rise, as with Grania's sister, Honor O'Malley, to a passionate quest of perfection, in which there must always be pain; but Honor's fears for her sister are not touched with the gloom of Calvinism.

Let us not be misled, however. Neither Miss Macleod's presentment nor Miss Lawless's is likely to be complete. Among the Scottish islanders whom Miss Macleod shows us driven by all the furies of love, quick with the knife in a love-quarrel, one may be very sure that most marriages are, as Miss Lawless describes them in Ireland, matters of bargain. And, on the other hand, although Miss Lawless is true to the average type when she describes Hurrish, the good husband, perfectly content with the girl chosen for him, but ignorant of any feeling beyond this calm domestic affection; or Murdough Blake, so curiously destitute of passion that it scarcely occurs to him to kiss the beautiful girl, his sweetheart—though in Grania, child herself of a love-match, the fires of passion are ready to blaze; yet one must remember that among this very peasantry of the

West, Dr. Hyde has collected his stories of peasant love-songs, in which passion speaks plain enough, sometimes in the simplest words, sometimes in so fierce a conceit as 'the rose-ember of her mouth.' It must be remembered also that Miss Macleod writes as one in full sympathy with her subject, and Miss Lawless does not. Politics, which to an Irish peasant mean interest in the long-drawn-out struggle of a smouldering rebellion, are a main part of the Celt's intellectual life in Ireland; and Miss Lawless can only see its ignoble side. Of the four Irishmen seriously presented in the two books mentioned above, one is an unmitigated ruffian; two, Maurice Brady and Murdough Blake, are windy, unprofitable creatures; and the one represented favourably, Hurrish O'Brien, is a good-natured giant, as little intellectual as a man can be. He shares the political creed of his class, but shares it without conviction; and the moments in his life which recur to him in the hour of death are the moments when he was carrying his landlord's game-bag. The type exists, and is physically and morally a good type; but it is not a high type, and yet it is the only one with which Miss Lawless can sympathise.

In a word, in the writings of Mr. Munro and Miss Macleod you have the Celt treated from the Celt's own point of view, with full sympathy for and understanding of all his inherited traditions and instincts—let him be the fisher of the western sea, or a survivor of the old *duine uasail*, discharged from the wars and encumbering the

ground after Peninsular days with a pride and exclusiveness for which the invading modern life allows no warrant. In the novels of Miss Lawless you have the Celt seen from outside by one accustomed to live beside him year in and year out, familiar with all the beauty and significance of his surroundings; described with a keen intuition of the need, in that squalid poverty, for a strong imagination of heaven's promises, but without the least sympathy for his clinging memory of the past or his aspiration in the present.¹ The restless stirring in the blood that the 'Lost Pibroch' wakens is the same call of romance that fires Murdough Blake's wordy harangues over the possibilities that the world has for a young man of parts; but Miss Lawless has no feeling for this need, which makes of the Celt always a ready wanderer. Yet she, no less than Neil Munro and Fiona Macleod, feels that intimate union between the Celt and the natural surroundings of his birth-place which makes of the wanderer one who can never settle overseas unhaunted by the homeward-drawing in his bones, and that keeps him for ever 'thinking long,' in the tender melancholy phrase of the northern Irish, which furnishes the refrain to one of Moira O'Neill's best poems.

The same theme—whether it be the homeward look across the Atlantic from Canadian plains, the

¹ Since this was written Miss Lawless has published a volume of poems which proves how fully she has sympathy in retrospect. Many, like her, have this nationalism in regard to the Ireland that has been.

song of leaving Ireland, the song of coming back, or the Irish harvester's weariness among the English hay and English wheat—recurs again and again in the little book, 'Songs of the Glens of Antrim,' which has deservedly found a readier welcome from the public than any book of minor poetry this many a year. A Celt Moira O'Neill certainly is; and in verse like this there is all the characteristic feeling of the race for open nature, and the characteristic free melody of wind and river:—

' Sure this is blessed Erin, an' this the same glen;
 The gold is on the whinbush, the wather sings again,
 The Fairy Thorn's in flower—an' what ails my heart then?
 Flower o' the May,
 Flower o' the May,
 What about the May-time, an' he far away!'

But to set down this authoress as having act or part in the Gaelic revival, or in any other self-conscious movement, would be to misconceive a talent whose great charm lies in its spontaneity. There are resemblances in plenty between her lyrics and the Connaught love-songs gathered by Dr. Hyde; but the essence of the Gaelic revival consists in resuscitating a literary tradition of highly wrought form and substance; and Moira O'Neill's work is more rightly described as Irish than as Gaelic.

A somewhat different classification is needed for Miss Barlow's admirable work in prose, and her less admirable but still interesting poems. Her subjects are the Celtic Irish as she sees them in a

quarter of Ireland where poverty is universal; and what she has to record of them is the response of their nature to conditions of almost humiliating penury—the pathos and the humanity to be found in the pride, the aspirations, and the charity of the very poor. Irish in substance and in spirit, her work belongs, not to the Celtic Ireland, but to the Ireland from which Goldsmith and Miss Edgeworth had their origin.

Of poets and poetesses, who have at least intermittently written work which is truly Celtic and truly poetical, there is an embarrassing number. Many of them will, I think, survive in the anthologies, which is no bad form of vitality. Mention should be made, too, of Mr. Standish James O'Grady, a man of truly poetic temper, the value of whose work in popularising the old legends cannot well be over-estimated. But, setting aside all these minor personages, we have to consider the work of three really notable men—the writer who signs himself 'A. E.'—Dr. Douglas Hyde, or to give him his Irish title, 'An Craoibhin Aoibhin'—and Mr. W. B. Yeats. 'A. E.' is the author of two exceedingly modest little volumes of verse, 'Homeward Songs by the Way' and 'The Earth Breath.' Both of these books express the varying moods of a mystic, accepting the pantheistic Oriental philosophy which holds that man's highest destiny is to merge the individual self in the larger consciousness of the universe. There are, indeed, moods of rejection as well as of acceptance; for in this poet's philosophy the way to the highest beauty is through

pain, the loveliness of earth and sky, of flowers and mankind, being only the phantoms of illusion. And, since no poet was ever more alive to external beauty, there are poems in which the lower, more human beauty is chosen before the cold heights and the primeval stream of quiet. But the essential characteristic of them all, whatever their tenor, is a sense of the living power that pervades and permeates the earth. For A. E. the dumb universe, *bruta tellus*, is charged with unspeakable properties, rife with voices. Sometimes we catch sight in his verse of a belief that all the pageant of past life is again enacted by shadowy forms, visible to the eyes that can see.

‘ In the wet dusk, silver-sweet,
Down the violet-scented ways,
As I moved with quiet feet
I was met by mighty days.

On the hedge the hanging dew
Glassed the eve and stars and skies :
While I gazed a madness grew
Into thundered battle-cries.

Where the hawthorn glimmered white,
Flashed the spear and fell the stroke,
Ah ! what faces, pale and bright,
Where the dazzling battle broke.’

Sometimes a less accidental, more philosophic conception is expressed, as in these brief lines entitled ‘Dust’ :—

‘ I heard them in their sadness say,
“ The earth rebukes the thought of God :
We are but embers wrapped in clay,
A little nobler than the sod.”

But I have touched the lips of clay ;
Mother, thy rudest sod to me
Is thrilled with fire of hidden day
And haunted by all mystery.'

In either case the conception is one essentially Celtic, for to the Celt's mind, earth and sea have always been quick with life, whether he puts that feeling into the shape of fairy myth, or merely is conscious of it in the drawing back again to the hills and waters that he first knew. And perhaps no Celtic poet has given to the soul of his race an expression more beautiful or more characteristic than this anonymous singer.

Such a talent as this, however, avoids rather than courts publicity, and is therefore, though not the less estimable, less of a felt force. The two men of letters who stand to-day for the Celtic revival in Ireland are Dr. Douglas Hyde and Mr. W. B. Yeats, and they embody excellently its two aspects. Mr. Yeats—who, if he should not be placed, as Mr. Rolleston in the 'Treasury of Irish Poetry' would place him, 'first among living writers in the English language,' is at least among the first of living poets—draws his inspiration wholly from the past, whether from the store of Celtic myth recorded in Celtic writings or from the wonderful medley of folk-story and fairy lore still current among the people. He has gone to the heroic cycle in the 'Wanderings of Oisín,' the long poem which gave a name to his first published volume; he returned to it the other day in the prose tragedy of 'Diarmuid and Grania,' written

by him in not very happy collaboration with Mr. George Moore. (And yet the fact that this movement should have drawn into it a writer of so much ability as Mr. Moore, trained in a school so utterly different, speaks at least for its power of attraction.) In two others of his longer works Mr. Yeats has turned rather to the vague popular tradition of strange creatures of earth and air. 'The Land of Heart's Desire' puts into a dramatic idyll of rare beauty the story so common in Irish folk-lore of a human bride stolen by the fairies. In 'The Countess Cathleen' the powers of human goodness, working under the will of God, are ranged against the greater and the lesser spirits of evil. Lastly, in his dramatic fantasy, 'The Shadowy Waters,' which, to my mind, contains his best and most characteristic work, Mr. Yeats has invented for himself a story intelligible only to those who know a little, or more than a little, of the Celtic mythology, as Mr. Swinburne's 'Atalanta in Calydon' presupposes in its readers a familiarity with Greek fable and poetry.

So far, then, his Celticism is established; but it would be unreasonable to attribute wholly to his Celtic blood or Celtic models what results from a very peculiar individuality. It is easy to say that no one but an Irishman, or at least a Gael, could have written these songs and stories; but it is not so easy to put one's finger on a passage and say, 'No Englishman would have shaped the words so,' except, indeed, in the rare instances when Mr. Yeats chooses to be simple and catches the

Connaughtman's soft accent, as in the 'Fiddler of Dooney,' and a few other ballads. Yet the Celtic influence is perceptible, as I have already noted, in the avoidance of emphatic rhythms and slurring of the stress. Sometimes, I think, this artifice betrays Mr. Yeats into a mere chaos of syllables; but sometimes it enables him to produce the soft murmur of wind and wave that haunts his 'Lake Isle of Innisfree':

' I will arise and go now, for always, night and day,
I hear lake-water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway or on the pavements gray,
I hear it in the deep heart's core';

or that dim and lovely fabric of sound and image which he calls the 'Cloths of Dreams':

' Had I the heaven's embroidered cloths,
Enwrought with golden and silver light—
The blue and the dim and the dark cloths
Of night and light and the half light—
I would spread the cloths under your feet.
But I, being poor, have only my dreams:
I have spread my dreams under your feet;
Tread softly, because you tread on my dreams.'

But my present purpose is to note that if the characters of his poems tend to move more and more in dreamland,¹ that is, perhaps, in some measure, because Mr. Yeats is a Celt, but more because he is himself. The tendency is marked enough. One

¹ It is difficult to write finally of a movement that is in progress. The little play 'Cathleen ni Houlihan,' produced since this was written, is perhaps the most effective thing that Mr. Yeats has published, and is perfectly in touch with the normal emotions—at least, of a Celt.

looks in vain in his later work (omitting 'Diar-muid and Grania') for a motive so simple as that of 'Countess Cathleen.' In the 'Land of Heart's Desire' the bride leaves her hearth and the very arms of her husband for a dream of the land whither, on another May eve, the princess of Ireland followed the fairy call,

'Where nobody gets old and godly and grave,
Where nobody gets old and crafty and wise,
Where nobody gets old and bitter of tongue;
And she is still there, busied with a dance,
Deep in the dewy shadow of a wood,
Or where stars walk upon a mountain top.'

And in 'The Shadowy Waters,' Forgael, leader of the ships, flies from earthly accomplishment, even of love's desire, to follow the gray birds, that are souls of the dead, to the streams at the world's end, and seek out the

'Love that the gods give,
When Ængus and his Edaine wake from sleep
And gaze on one another through our eyes,
And turn brief longing and deceiving hope
And bodily tenderness to the soft fire
That shall burn time when times have ebbd away.'

Of a surety this quest of the ideal, in all its forms, is characteristic of the Celt; it has played its part in Irish politics in the age-long dream of an Ireland glorified and regenerated that has lured men away from the problems lying at their feet. Nor is it without significance that Mr. Yeats, as well as A. E., should be a professed mystic, justifying, on grounds of an esoteric theosophy, the

old tales of faery as at least reflections of a reality. But it would be unreasonable to suppose that all Celtic literature must be strongly tinged with mysticism; and it is well to turn for a corrective to what we can find of Dr. Hyde's work, since Dr. Hyde, if any man, is representative of truly Celtic Ireland. He is in touch at first hand with the literary tradition that Mr. Yeats only knows through the medium of translation—though Mr. Yeats catches the essence of it, as Keats caught the essence of the Greek.

It is impossible to institute a serious comparison between the two writers in point of merit, but the difference in temperament is made plain by two handlings of the same theme. 'The Twisting of the Rope,' a little one-act comedy by Mr. Hyde (played in his original Gaelic at the Irish Literary Theatre's performance last autumn, and printed in 'Samhain' with an English version), is based on a story included in Mr. Yeats's volume 'The Secret Rose.' In each case the whole interest turns on the figure of Hanrahan, ex-schoolmaster and vagrant poet, who has entered a house in Munster, and with his 'sweet subtle tongue' is beguiling his hostess's daughter. The mother will not let him be put out by force, for a poet's curse, if spoken indoors, has terrible power; but once induce him to set foot outside, and the door may be shut in his face. So he is set to twist a hayrope, and as he moves backward in the twisting, he crosses the threshold and is promptly barred out. The motive is of the slightest, but not so the work. The

magic, and raised a fairy lover, and incurred her wrath, and is therefore a man under a curse, who moves through the world like a creature in a dream. The Hanrahan of Dr. Hyde's play is a creature more solidly established on the earth; pedantic, arrogant, overbearing, as were his mates in the eighteenth century; easily to be persuaded, once 'he has drink taken,' that he is king of all Ireland; a bragging Connaught rogue, vaunting his province in the teeth of the Munstermen; but, with all this, indubitably the man of genius, the inspired singer. It is not fair to quote from what is practically a literal translation; but highly as I rate the Hanrahan stories in Mr. Yeats's book, I should rate Dr. Hyde's little comedy higher; it is a slight thing, but shows the creative imagination in its humour and its pathos, and in its achievement of a very difficult feat—to convey the sense of genius and noble thoughts residing in something very like a blackguard. And another little piece, written later, 'The Tinker and the Fairy,' is even more charming; fairly to be set beside one of Musset's comedies for its happy union of humorous and lyrical invention.

To sum up—if it be asked what is the distinctive characteristic of Gaelic literature, one must reply that no literature can be reduced to a formula; but that as precision and limit are leading traits of the French, so the Irish are peculiarly sensible to the beauty of vagueness, of large, dim, and waving shapes. Yet this is by no means universally true.

far less exaggerated form the Celtic peculiarities than do Mr. Yeats, Miss Macleod, and other writers in English; and the same may be said of the Welsh writers whom Mr. Jones translates. Moreover, even in authors so gifted as these English writers, the research for strange beauties approaches at times perilously near the bizarre, and imparts a touch of insincerity, which those who use a Celtic language in writing of things Celtic seem able to avoid. But whatever differences may be detected in the works of these writers, there is always audible a note that distinguishes them from the work of other peoples. The essential point about the revival is that writers of Celtic race turn increasingly for subjects to the Celtic mythology and to the history, past or present, of their own people, addressing themselves more and more to an audience presumably Celtic in sympathy, and equipped with some knowledge of Celtic history and tradition; and finally, in the latest development of the movement, making their appeal in the old tongue.

CELTIC SAGAS RE-TOLD

THERE is no more practical evidence of a book's value than is afforded by the willingness of publishers to seize upon it at the expiration of its copyright ; and though no such evidence was needed in the case of Lady Charlotte Guest's famous version of 'The Mabinogion,' which had furnished the text for discourses by critics so great as Rénan and Matthew Arnold, and the groundwork for one of Tennyson's best idylls, yet its appearance in two re-issues in the very month when Lady Gregory published her English version of the old Irish heroic tales was a hopeful augury for the Irish work, and naturally suggested a comparison,—which however will be used here mainly to illustrate by the method of resemblance and difference the ancient poetry of Ireland.

On the title-page of his excellent little edition, Mr. Alfred Nutt (to whom, both as scholar and as publisher, all students of Celtic literature owe a deep debt) describes 'The Mabinogion' as Medieval Welsh Romances; and the word 'romances,' deliberately chosen, carries at once in its etymology a hint of Rome. But at the time when all the rest

of the known Western world (for Russia is as much Asiatic as European) was subjugated and profoundly modified by Rome, two purely European countries, Scandinavia and Ireland, were un-reached by that momentous conquest. Each of these countries had a literature which is still preserved, and the two literatures have this negative resemblance, that each was alien and difficult to the heirs of classic culture. It is true that these early narrative inventions have a natural resemblance to the primitive poetry of Greece, a resemblance which becomes more apparent as study grows closer; but Greece leavened Rome, and Greek was the mother tongue of Christianity, so that Greek literature comes to all of us somewhat as part of our intellectual inheritance. Indeed, it is not alien; and most of us, before we can reach the spirit of the Norse or Celtic sagas, must endeavour to interpret them into terms of Homer.

In so far as the Teutonic stories are concerned, the work of reconciliation has been fully done. The skalds have their due; and their creations, known in the eighteenth century only to a scholar like Gray, have now sunk into the general mind of Europe, through the mediation of Wagner and a hundred others. It is only natural, for the stock that created them is widespread to-day. Less easy of access are the Celtic stories and poems, whose unlikeness to the Norse is explained by Mr. Yeats in a preface which is a worthy example of a poet's criticism. In it he tells how, when he was a boy,

William Morris came to Dublin and talked to him of these old stories.

He spoke of the Irish account of the battle of Clontarf, and of the Norse account, and said, that one saw the Norse and Irish tempers in the two accounts. The Norseman was interested in the way things are done, but the Irishman turned aside, evidently well pleased to be out of so dull a business, to describe beautiful supernatural events. He was thinking, I suppose, of the young man who came from Aebhen of the Grey Rock, giving up immortal love and youth, that he might fight and die by Murrugh's side. He said that the Norseman had the dramatic temper, and the Irishman had the lyrical. I think I should have said epical and romantic rather than dramatic and lyrical, but his words, which have so much greater authority than mine, mark the distinction very well, and not only between Irish and Norse, but between Irish and other un-Celtic literatures. The Irish storyteller could not interest himself with an unbroken interest in the way men like himself burned a house, or won wives no more wonderful than themselves. His mind constantly escaped out of daily circumstance, as a bough that has been held down by a weak hand suddenly straightens itself out. His imagination was always running off to Tir-nan-oge, to the Land of Promise, which is as near to the country people of to-day as it was to Cuchulain and his companions. His belief in its nearness cherished in its turn the lyrical temper, which is always athirst for an emotion, a beauty, which cannot be found in its perfection upon earth, or only for a moment. His imagination, which had not been able to believe in Cuchulain's greatness, until it had brought the Great Queen, the red eyebrowed goddess, to woo him upon the battlefield, could not be satisfied with a friendship less romantic and lyrical than that of Cuchulain and Ferdiad, who kissed one another after the day's fighting, or with a love less romantic than that of Baile and Aillinn, who died at the report of one another's deaths, and married in Tir-nan-oge.

Not less natural than the easier access of Norse legends to the mind of a world becoming predominantly Teuton, is the fact that the only Celtic sagas which have won their way into the imagination of Europe are those which took shape among

Celts half Romanised. The Arthurian legend spread from Wales and from Cornwall till it became one of the great sources of medieval poetry; but, says Mr. Nutt, 'It is not hard to understand why the Norman who went to Ireland remained unaffected by the varied and splendid Irish literature, while from Wales he brought back the Arthurian romance.' The Welsh, living in a land which Rome indeed had never subjugated, yet which was divided by no barrier of estranging sea from an England long Roman, felt the influence of Rome and Christian classic culture. They kept the old barbaric stories, the myths of the old fairy world, but they reshaped them, and 'attenuated what in its aspect might have been too fantastic, too uncouthly strange.' The tales which Lady Charlotte Guest translated took the form in which she found them, it seems, in the eleventh or twelfth centuries. Some of them are probably as old as human speech almost; myths of the great gods of nature, Manawyddan, the Irish Manannan, lord of the sea, and his compeers; some semi-historical, like those which group themselves round the person of Arthur. But in all of them there is present, in greater or less degree, the influence of medieval chivalry and its characteristic turns of speech and thought. When the Normans came to Ireland, they came among a people wholly alien to their traditional culture, and though they conquered, they did not modify the intellectual life in which their own was presently submerged. They left no trace on the Irish lays and romances. But in

Wales they came among a people prepared by centuries of slow infiltration for a fusion which should result in the blending of two types to produce a third, and the Welsh minstrels and storytellers quickly told their own stories as a Norman might have told them,—modernising them, in fact, somewhat as Tennyson, seven centuries later, again modernised the legends of Arthur's chivalry. The substance remained Celtic, the forms of the prose and verse were those traditional in Wales,—forms largely modified by models from Ireland, the focus of Celtic culture—but the spirit was mainly Norman, or at least Norman-Welsh. Norman minstrels, thus brought into contact with a new and living literature, already interpreted, as it were, into their own terms, caught at the chance, and spread the tales through the Romance-speaking peoples of Europe, choosing those where the transformation had been completest; just as Tennyson, when he based his 'Geraint' upon 'The Mabinogion,' based it upon a tale which can scarcely have taken the Welsh form in which the translator found it earlier than the twelfth century.

Thus, though in some instances the transformation is very slight and superficial, still in each and all of the tales which Lady Charlotte Guest translated, the champions of the Celtic world appear metamorphosed into Norman knights in armour. In the case of Ireland all this is different. There are three distinct strata of Irish folk-lay or folk-romance. First, there are stories like 'The

Fate of the Children of Lir ' which belong to the older world, and the days of the Tuatha de Danann ; in which the personages are all supernatural, with no fixed term of life, and in which the power of enchantment is a common possession. Secondly, there is the cycle of lays which corresponds roughly to the heroic cycle of Greece; tales of the Ulster heroes of the Red Branch and their contemporaries, kings and queens of Connaught. Mortals they are all of them ; though some, like Cuchulain, have fairy blood, and though all have superhuman strength, they all know age and death. Thirdly comes the so-called Fenian cycle, telling the deeds of Finn MacCumhail and his companions, in the last days before Christianity came into the land. This group of lays, which more than any other have maintained their hold on the popular imagination among the people which created them, differ sharply from the Red Branch cycle in being deliberately set against a background of Christianity; for the deeds of Finn and the Fianna are chiefly related by Ossian son of Finn, when, after the sojourn with Niamh the fairy princess in Tirnanoge, he ' thought long ' for Ireland, and returned, despite her warnings, to find himself bowed and old, his companions dead and forgotten, and monk and bell supreme in the land. He told the tales in long colloquies with his teacher St. Patrick, and the Christian bards who made the lays took an unholy delight in turning the listener's sympathy to the forbidden and full-blooded delights of love and chase and battle.

Into the oldest and most purely mythic cycle also the Christian element is introduced, for the children of Lir, doomed to wear the shape of swans for 900 years, can find no release till Columbkille comes to transform them. And, even among the legends of the Red Branch a beautiful tale, still current, tells how Conall Carnach in his wanderings came one day to the city of Jerusalem and saw the Crucifixion; but I leave that story to be told in English by the man who told it to me, and it is probably of later invention. Strictly speaking, the Red Branch cycle, which Lady Gregory has undertaken to interpret, shows the pagan Celtic imagination in its most typical and least modified shaping of thought and words. But in none of the Irish legends or lays, through all their diversity of subject and treatment, is there any trace of external influence beyond what Christianity represents. The heroes of 'The Mabinogion' are knights on horseback; they encounter in the forms of medieval chivalry; they attack and defend medieval castles. The heroes of the Red Branch fight in chariots like Hector and Achilles; the Fianna are warriors on foot; and in all the poems the fortress is a *dun* with banks of earth or palisades to protect it; and the kings and princes live not in stone castles but in such a house as Conchubar MacNessa, the High King, had in Emain on the height of Macha, which is now Armagh.

A fine palace it was, having three houses in it, the Royal House, and the Speckled House, and the House of the Red Branch.

In the Royal House there were three times fifty rooms, and the

walls were made of red yew, with copper rivets. And Conchubar's own room was on the ground, and the walls of it faced with bronze, and silver up above, with gold birds on it, and their heads set with shining carbuncles ; and there were nine partitions from the fire to the wall, and thirty feet the height of each partition. And there was a silver rod before Conchubar with three golden apples on it, and when he shook the rod or struck it all in the house would be silent.

It was in the House of the Red Branch were kept the heads and the weapons of beaten enemies, and in the Speckled House were kept the swords and the shields and the spears of the heroes of Ulster. And it was called the Speckled House because of the brightness and the colours of the hilts of the swords, and the bright spears, green or grey, with rings and bands of silver and gold about them, and the gold and silver that were on the rims and the bosses of the shields, and the brightness of the drinking-cups and the horns.

In a word, the civilisation or glorious barbarism depicted in Irish saga is one that had not passed, and that never passed, into the Roman type ; and the thoughts, the ideals, alike in life and art, of the bards who described it, are alien to us, as they were alien to the Norman.

It will be seen, then, that the task which Lady Gregory undertook was not simply the task of a scholar, which is to render fully the original, displaying the inherent imperfections and crudities as things in themselves of scarcely less interest than the excellences of a primitive composition. Her task, in endeavouring to make easy of enjoyment for readers of to-day these prose epics as the bards of the eleventh century left them, was akin to that task of conciliation which the Welshmen themselves had performed before 'The Mabinogion' took the shape in which Lady Charlotte Guest found it. We may take the case at its simplest, as for example in the story of Da Derga's

Hostel, the bulk of which has come down to us in a manuscript of the twelfth century or earlier, and not in some later version. Yet even in such a case we have, according to scholars, a copy of the text made probably three centuries after the saga, took its definite shape, and therefore probably unreliable. It is impossible to believe that the artist who made that trenchant story made it with such clumsy iterations of incident as occur in the existing copies. But, no matter where the blame for these is rightly to be placed—whether on the first maker of the tale, or on others who spoilt it later in the telling—Lady Gregory for her purpose, which was to give an acceptable version of the story, had a right to correct the blunders. And, in other matters, where taste has finally changed, she had an equal right to omit certain amplifications of description, just as, if one needed nowadays to popularise Homer, it would be wise to omit or curtail the catalogue of the ships. The scope of Lady Gregory's work has therefore differed from Lady Charlotte Guest's in that she has not been content to translate one manuscript, but by comparing many, by re-arranging, selecting, and compressing, she has produced a version of the story, faithful in essentials, differing mainly from the originals by omissions. In many cases the same criteria, if applied, would involve alteration of the stories in 'The Mabinogion'; but, as I have already urged, the Welsh writers were under the influence of Latin models, and omitted many touches common to Celtic imagination. For

example, Ingcel in the Irish manuscript has seven pupils in each eye. Lady Gregory robs him of this characteristic, and I make no doubt that the Welsh bard of the twelfth century would also have suppressed the grotesque detail. And so, briefly, the translator of the Red Branch sagas, if she was to accomplish for Irish heroic literature what had been accomplished for the Welsh half a century ago, had to do something more than Lady Charlotte Guest had done; she had to make not merely a translation but a recension of the epic material. This work, involving a free exercise of the artist's constructive faculty, has been done in consultation with Mr. Yeats, but the work is Lady Gregory's, and, in my judgment, it would be hard to overpraise it.

Individual preferences may be discounted, and every man has a natural fondness for compositions that call up to him if it were only the names of places in his own country; but I think it probable that the lover of literature, having no tie either to Ireland or to Wales, will find the book which Lady Gregory has given to the world a greater source of enjoyment than Lady Charlotte Guest's 'Mabino-gion.' Partly, because the stories are in themselves bolder, freer, more affluent in the sap of life; but principally because of the very curious and difficult feat which the translator has accomplished. Lady Charlotte Guest's English is pure, simple, and harmonious; and yet it is in a manner bookish, for it is deliberately archaic. I cite a passage from 'The Lady of the Fountain.'

And Owain rose up, and clothed himself, and opened a window of the chamber, and looked towards the castle ; and he could see neither the bounds, nor the extent of the hosts that filled the streets. And they were fully armed ; and a vast number of women were with them, both on horseback and on foot ; and all the ecclesiastics in the city, singing. And it seemed to Owain that the sky resounded with the vehemence of their cries, and with the noise of the trumpets, and with the singing of the ecclesiastics. In the midst of the throng he beheld the bier, over which was a veil of white linen ; and wax tapers were burning beside and around it, and none that supported the bier was lower in rank than a powerful baron.

Never did Owain see an assemblage so gorgeous with satin, and silk, and sendall. And following the train, he beheld a lady with yellow hair falling over her shoulders and stained with blood ; and about her a dress of yellow satin, which was torn. Upon her feet were shoes of variegated leather. And it was a marvel that the ends of her fingers were not bruised, from the violence with which she smote her hands together. Truly she would have been the fairest lady Owain ever saw had she been in her usual guise. And her cry was louder than the shout of the men or the clamour of the trumpets. No sooner had he beheld the lady than he became inflamed with her love, so that it took entire possession of him.

Then he inquired of the maiden who the lady was. 'Heaven knows,' replied the maiden ; 'she may be said to be the fairest, and the most chaste, and the most liberal, and the wisest, and the most noble of women. And she is my mistress ; and she is called the Countess of the Fountain, the wife of him whom thou didst slay yesterday.' 'Verily,' said Owain, 'she is the woman that I love best.' 'Verily,' said the maiden, 'she shall also love thee not a little.'

Compare with that the description of Etain.

There was a king over Ireland before this time whose name was Eochaid Feidlech, and it is he was grandfather to Conaire the Great.

He was going one time over the fair-green of Bri Leith, and he saw at the side of a well a woman, with a bright comb of silver and gold, and she washing in a silver basin, having four golden birds on it, and little bright purple stones set in the rim of the basin. A beautiful purple cloak she had, and silver fringe to it and a gold brooch ; and she had on her a dress of green silk with a long hood embroidered in

red gold, and wonderful clasps of gold and silver on her breasts and on her shoulders. The sunlight was falling on her, so that the gold and the green silk were shining out. Two plaits of hair she had, four locks in each plait, and a bead at the point of every lock, and the colour of her hair was like yellow flags in summer, or like red gold after it is rubbed.

There she was, letting down her hair to wash it, and her arms out through the sleeveholes of her shift. Her soft hands were as white as the snow of a single night, and her eyes as blue as any blue flower, and her lips as red as the berries of the rowan-tree, and her body as white as the foam of the wave. The bright light of the moon was in her face, the lightness of pride in her eyebrows, a dimple of delight in each of her cheeks, the light of wooing in her eyes, and when she walked she had a step that was steady and even, like the walk of a queen.

Of all the women in the world she was the best and the nicest and the most beautiful that had ever been seen, and it is what King Eochaid and his people thought, that she was from the hills of the Sidhe. It is of her it was said, 'All are dear, and all are shapely till they are put beside Etain.'

Then Eochaid sent his people to bring her to him, and when she came, he said, 'Who are you yourself and where do you come from?' 'It is easy to say that,' she said; 'I am Etain, daughter of Etar, king of the Riders of the Sidhe. And I have been in this place ever since I was born, twenty years ago, in a hill of the Sidhe, and kings and great men among them have been asking my love, but they got nothing from me, for since the time I could first speak I have loved yourself, and given you a child's love, because of the great talk I have heard of your grandeur. And when I saw you now I knew you by all I had heard of you; and so I have reached to you at last.'

'It is no bad friend you have been looking for,' said Eochaid, 'but there will be a welcome before you, and I will leave every other woman for you, and it is with yourself I will live from this out, so long as you keep good behaviour.'

Lady Gregory's prose differs notably from the other, and, to my thinking, differs for the better, in two ways. First, it is not skilfully imitated from the bygone language of old books, but is based, as all living prose should be, on a speech living and spoken to-day. And, secondly, it does

what is most difficult in a translation—it suggests the idiom of the original without ceasing itself to be idiomatic. That is not unnatural, because it is based upon the dialect of English which has grown up in those parts of Ireland where Gaelic is, and always has been, constantly spoken. This English is, so far as vocabulary goes, perhaps the purest known to me; it is certainly the least contaminated by slang, and even in the mouth of those who speak it from childhood, it keeps something of the precision natural in an acquired language,—but with this difference, that it is wholly free from the mass of modern phrases generated by convenience, which are specially appropriate in journalism and impossible in poetry. A man speaking this English would say that a certain poem was written before the time of St. Patrick; Mr. Nutt would say that it ‘antedates the fifth century.’ I do not say that an English labourer or farmer would have employed the locution which I attribute (not, I regret to say, without reason) to Mr. Nutt; I only observe that the English spoken by Irish-speaking peasants is freer than any other from all that is akin to this diction, and is therefore specially proper to form a basis for poetic prose. But the Irish peasant, while adhering to the most classic English vocabulary, modifies the idiom and the rhythm of the language into a likeness of his own; and though certain of the most distinctively Irish, and therefore most un-English, idioms employed by Lady Gregory (for instance ‘there will be a welcome before you’) are strange to my ear, I recognise

the fidelity of her version to the general type of language familiar to me in West Donegal. Yet those who read it will not, I think, find anything repellent in an English which could be translated into Irish almost word by word.

If they are of my mind,—and criticism must in the last resort be founded on individual experience—they will discover that the story of Cuchulain has at last been told in such a way that it can be read with growing delight. I had previously essayed it several times in the best versions I could come at, and got no pleasure except from the single lay which tells the fate of Deirdré and the sons of Usnach—an episode which enters into the story of Cuchulain only as giving the reason why Fergus Mac Roy, Cuchulain's master in arms, who alone might have withstood his pupil, was found on the side of Connaught in the great war fought for the sake of the Brown Bull of Cuailgné. I owe to Lady Gregory's skill,—and thousands will probably acknowledge the same debt—the vision of Cuchulain in his beauty, his terror, and his charm. And the shortest way to explain how her mediation has been effected is to compare her rendering of one passage with another specimen of the translator's art which is, from its own point of view and for its own purpose, not inferior to hers. I take the ending of the tale which tells how Conary, the heaven-sent king of Ireland, obeying the dictates of his goodness and his chivalry, broke the arbitrary *geasa* laid on him by the people of the Sidhe, and came by his fate, the valour of himself and

his companions availing nothing against enchantments. Conall Carnach, who had stayed defending his king till the last in the hostel against the reaver's attack, when he saw Conaire dead of the magic drouth, cut his way through with great slaughter. Then, says Lady Gregory:

Conall Carnach, after he got away, went on to his father's house, and but half his shield left in his hand, and a few bits left of his two spears. And he found Amergin, his father, out before his dun in Tailltin.

'Those are fierce wolves that have hunted you, my son,' said he. 'It was not wolves that wounded me, but a sharp fight with fighting men,' said Conall. 'Have you news from Da Derga's Inn?' said Amergin. 'Is your lord living?' 'He is not living,' said Conall. 'I swear by the gods the great tribes of Ulster swear by, the man is a coward that came out alive, leaving his lord dead among his enemies,' said Amergin. 'My own wounds are not white, old hero,' said Conall. And with that he showed him his right arm, that was full of wounds, 'That arm fought there, my son,' said Amergin. 'That is true,' said Conall. 'There are many in front of the Inn now, it gave drinks of death to last night.'

Here is now a literal rendering of the same passage given by Mr. Whitley Stokes from the 'Lebor na h-Uidre,' a manuscript of the end of the eleventh or beginning of the twelfth century.

Now Conall Carnach escaped from the Hostel, and thrice fifty spears had gone through the arm which upheld his shield. He fared forth till he reached his father's house, with half his shield in his hand, and his sword, and the fragments of his two spears. Then he found his father before his garth in Taltin.

'Swift are the wolves that have hunted thee, my son,' said his father.

'Tis this that has wounded us, thou old hero, an evil conflict with warriors,' Conall Carnach replied.

'Hast thou then news of Da Derga's Hostel?' asked Amergin. 'Is thy lord alive?'

'He is *not* alive,' says Conall.

‘I swear to God what the great tribes of Ulaidh swear, it is cowardly for the man who went thereout alive, having left his lord with his foes in death.’

‘My wounds are not white, thou old hero,’ says Conall.

He shews him his shield-arm, whereon were thrice fifty wounds : this is what was inflicted on it. The shield that guarded it is what saved it. But the right arm had been played upon as far as two-thirds thereof, since the shield had not been guarding it. That arm was mangled and maimed and wounded and pierced, save that the sinews kept it to the body without separation.

‘That arm fought to-night, my son,’ says Amergin.

‘True is that, thou old hero,’ says Conall Carnach. ‘Many there are unto whom it gave drinks of death to-night in front of the Hostel.’

I have chosen this passage, first because it shows that the Irish poets, though their tendency was to redundant amplification, could upon occasion be as terse as any Icelander ; and secondly, because it illustrates in a small compass the whole of Lady Gregory’s work of recension. Those who are connoisseurs in literature rather than simply lovers of poetry will prefer the literal version which keeps the quaintness, the crude savour, of primitive literature,—though for my own part I think that barbarisms, which in the original even of Homer fall naturally into their place, acquire a disturbing salience in translation. For the connoisseurs, however, there are, and there should be, books like that of Mr. Whitley Stokes ; but it is in no way contemning the work of scholars to say that by their means Lady Gregory has been enabled to do for ordinary lovers of literature a thing which they have not done, and probably could not do.

There is no use in trying to tell in brief the story of Cuchulain, any more than the story of

Achilles. I would only emphasise a little, what Mr. Yeats has touched on in his preface,—the keen fidelity to truth, the presentment, not less observant than lyrical, of human greatness, which underlies all the wild hyperbole of the narrative. When the boy Setanta,—for he had not yet done the feat that was to get him his name, Cuchulain, the Hound of Culann—sets out alone from his mother's house for the court of Emain Macha, shortening the way for himself with his hurling stick, and the silver ball which he drove before him, every trait in his actions is true to the nature of high-spirited boyhood; and his first contention with the boy-troop of Emain, and the terms which he imposed before he would enter their society, are simply the facts of a fighting boy's school life poetised and glorified. And his way of taking arms, when he overheard Cathbad the Druid's prophecy that if any young man should take arms that day his name would be greater than any name in Ireland but his span of life short; his way of beguiling his charioteer into an expedition so that his first day of taking arms might be also his first day of killing and spoil-winning; his way to rid himself of the champion Conall Carnach who went along to protect the untried fighter; all these are deep in human nature. It is true that maybe in real life he would have slipped the linch-pin out of Conall's chariot, instead of breaking its yoke with a stone-cast, and maybe an Iceland skald would have shown him doing so; but none the less the trait is true in its essence.

‘Bad luck on your throwing and on yourself,’ said Conall. ‘And any one that likes may strike your head off now, for I will go with you no farther.’ ‘That is just what I wanted,’ said Cuchulain.

True also in the same symbolic way, but curiously peculiar to the Celtic race, is the episode of the boy’s return from this first foray, when the madness of battle had lit in him for the first time, and he was seen coming back in anger, with the bleeding heads of enemies in his chariot, and the wild stags that he had run down bound to it, and white birds bearing him company. Those who saw him feared that the lust for slaying burned in him still, and if his anger could not be cooled, the young men of Emain would be in danger from him.

Then they all consulted together, and it is what they agreed, to send out three fifties of women of Emain to meet him, and they having their breasts uncovered. When the boy saw the women coming, there was shame on him, and he leaned down his head into the cushions of the chariot, and hid his face from them. And the wildness went out of him, and his feasting clothes were brought, and water for washing; and there was a great welcome before him.

Qualis ab incepto—Cuchulain in his first feats, in his hero-training with Scathach the woman warrior, in his wooing of Emer, in his long combats against the champions of Connaught, and in the tragic scenes of his pre-destined close—is always the same, yet always changing, as a man must change. His speech and his acts are never more characteristic than in the last story but one of his doings—‘and that is a very sad story,’ said an old shanachy to me the other day, as we walked up from the bog where he had left off cutting turf to converse

eagerly over his lore of the gods and heroes. That is the scene where he fights with and slays his son—child of Aoife, another Amazon of the Scotch Isles, whom he had defeated when she came out to destroy Scathach, and who had given him so much of her love, that when she learnt how he had married Emer, she trained up this boy to be his vanquisher. Cuchulain had no will to slay the young hero of unknown name, who had put down in turn all the other champions of Ulster; but the fight was the hardest he had ever fought, and his anger came on him, as it had come in that other cruel fight with his chosen friend Ferdiad, and the flames of the hero light began to shine about his head, and the son, seeing this token, knew his father. He turned aside the aim of the spear that he was casting, but Cuchulain threw the Gae Bulg, the magic spear made of a monster's bones, that Aoife herself had given him and that had slain Ferdiad. And then the boy, dying, showed the ring that was his token, and told his name which he had been under oath not to reveal for any threat. - 'But O Cuchulain of the sharp sword,' he said, 'it was pity you not to know me the time I threw the slanting spear behind you in the fight.'

I will not quote the song that Cuchulain made, telling of his bitter grief that for this death alone he could exact no vengeance, and of the loneliness that was on him; nor the description of the rage with which he faced the men of Ulster, till Cathbad the Druid sent him down to fight the waves of the

sea for three days, lest he should destroy his own friends. Nor the chapter that tells of his doom gathering, and how Emer, for all her jealousy and fierceness, bid Niamh, whom he loved, and the poets and the Druids, to take him away to the Deaf Valley where he would hear no sound of the outer world; and how even there the witch daughters of Calatin found him, and drew him on with false tales of his house assailed, to go with Laog his charioteer, and his horses, the Black Sanglain and the Grey of Macha, in defiance of all omens to the fated battle. I will quote rather this passage which tells how Cuchulain went to take vengeance on Maeve's army for the boy-troop who had been destroyed in defending Ulster while the fairy-sleep was laid on him; and how afterwards the women of the other host came out to look on his beauty.

And then Cuchulain put on his armour, and took his spears, and his sword, and his shield that had a rim so sharp it would cut a hair against the stream, and his cloak that was made of the precious fleeces of the land of the Sidhe, that had been brought to him by Manannan from the King of Sorchu. He went out then against the men of Ireland and attacked them, and his anger came on them, so that it was not his own appearance he had on him, but the appearance of a god. And after that he made a round of the whole army, mowing them down on every side, in revenge for the boy-troop of Emain.

But the next day he was standing on the hill, young and comely and shining, and the cloud of his anger had gone from him. Then the women and young girls in the camp, and the poets and the singers came out to look at him; but Maeve hid her face behind a shelter of shields, thinking that he might make a cast at her with his sling. And there was wonder on these women to see him so quiet and gentle to-day, and he such a terror to the whole army yesterday; and they bade the men lift them up on their shields to the heights of their shoulders, the way they could have a good look at him.

And let it be remembered Cuchulain is only one of many figures not less living. The story of Deirdré, beautiful as Helen, and gifted like Cassandra with unavailing prophecy, is perhaps even more poignant than anything in the cycle; and there is at least one tale, the Contention of the Women, where a touch of laughter enters into the romantic narrative, yet without lowering the pitch. But when all is said, it is superfluous to say anything except to advise those who love early literature to read, and to advise those Irish who have a pride in their own inheritance to read and read again.

LITERATURE AMONG THE ILLITERATES

THERE is nothing better known about Ireland than this fact: that illiteracy is more frequent among the Irish Catholic peasantry than in any other class of the British population; and that especially upon the Irish-speaking peasant does the stigma lie. Yet it is, perhaps, as well to inquire a little more precisely what is meant by an illiterate. If to be literate is to possess a knowledge of the language, literature, and historical traditions of a man's own country—and this is no very unreasonable application of the word—then this Irish-speaking peasantry has a better claim to the title than can be shown by most bodies of men. I have heard the existence of an Irish literature denied by a roomful of prosperous educated gentlemen; and, within a week, I have heard, in the same county, the classics of that literature recited by an Irish peasant who could neither write nor read. On which part should the stigma of illiteracy set the uglier brand?

The Gaelic revival sends many of us to school in Irish-speaking districts, and, if it did nothing else, at least it would have sent us to school in pleasant

places among the most lovable preceptors. It was a blessed change from London to a valley among hills that look over the Atlantic, with its brown stream tearing down among boulders, and its heathy banks, where the keen fragrance of bog-myrtle rose as you brushed through in the morning on your way to the head of a pool. Here was indeed a desirable academy, and my preceptor matched it. A big, loose-jointed old man, rough, brownish-gray all over, clothes, hair, and face; his cheeks were half-hidden by the traditional close-cropped whisker, and the rest was an ill-shorn stubble. Traditional, too, was the small, deep-set, blue eye, the large, kindly mouth, uttering English with a soft brogue, which, as is always the case among those whose real tongue is Irish, had no trace of vulgarity. Indeed, it would have been strange that vulgarity of any sort should show in one who had perfect manners, and the instinct of a scholar, for this preceptor was not even technically illiterate. He could read and write English, and Irish, too, which is by no means so common; and I have not often seen a man happier than he was over Douglas Hyde's collection of Connacht love-songs, which I had fortunately brought with me. But his main interest was in history—that history which had been rigorously excluded from his school training, the history of Ireland. I would go on ahead to fish a pool, and leave him poring over Hyde's book; but, when he picked me up, conversation went on where it broke off—somewhere among the fortunes

of Desmonds and Burkes, O'Neills and O'Donnells. And when one had hooked a large sea-trout, on a singularly bad day, in a place where no sea-trout was expected, it was a little disappointing to find that Charlie's only remark, as he swept the net under my capture, was: 'The Clancartys was great men too. Is there any of them living?' The scholar in him had completely got the better of the sportsman.

Beyond his historic lore (which was really considerable, and by no means inaccurate) he had many songs by heart, some of them made by Carolan, some by nameless poets, written in the Irish which is spoken to-day. I wrote down a couple of Charlie's lyrics which had evidently a local origin; but what I sought was one of the Shanachies who carried in his memory the classic literature of Ireland, the epics or ballads of an older day. Charlie was familiar, of course, with the matter of this 'Ossianic' literature, as we all are, for example, with the story of Ulysses. He knew how Oisín dared to go with a fairy woman to her own land; how he returned in defiance of her warning; how he found himself lonely and broken in a changed land; and how, in the end, he gave into the teaching of St. Patrick ('Sure how would he stand up against it?' said Charlie), and was converted to Christ. But all the mass of rhymed verse which relates the dialogues between Oisín and Patrick, the tales of Finn and his heroes which Oisín told to the Saint, the fierce answers with which the old warrior met the Gospel argu-

ments—all this was only vaguely familiar to him. I was looking for a man who had it by heart.

The search for the repositories of this knowledge leads sometimes into strange contrasts. One friend of mine lay stretched for long hours on top of a roof of sticks and peat-scraws which was propped against the wall of a ruined cabin, while within the evicted tenant, still clinging to his home as life clings to the shattered body, lay bedridden on a lair of rushes, and chanted the deeds of heroes; his voice issuing through the vent in the roof, at once window and chimney, from the kennel in which was neither room nor light for a man to sit and record the verses. My own chance was luckier and happier. It came on a day when a party of us had set out in quest of a remote mountain lough. Our way led along the river, and as we drove up to where the valley contracted, and the tillage land decreased in extent and fertility, the type of the people changed. They were Celts and Catholics, evident to the least practised eye. A little further still from civilisation we reached the fringe that was Gaelic not merely in blood; the kindly woman whose cottage warmed and sheltered us when we returned half-foundered from plunging through bogs was an Irish speaker. She had no songs herself, but if I wanted them her neighbour, James Kelly, was the best of company, and would keep me listening the length of a night.

I pushed my bicycle through a drizzle of misty rain up the road over mountainous moor, before I saw his cottage standing trim and white under its

thatch in a screen of trees, and as I was nearing it, the boy with me showed me James down in a hollow, filling a barrow with turf. He stopped work as I came down, and called off his dog, looking at me curiously enough, for, indeed, strangers were a rarity in that spot, clean off the tourist track, and away from any thoroughfare. One's presence had to be explained out of hand, and I told him exactly why I had come. He looked surprised and perhaps a little pleased, that his learning should draw students. But he made no pretence of ignorance; the only question was, how he could help me. Did I want songs of the modern kind, or the older songs of Finn Mac-Cool? If it was the latter, it seemed I was not well able to manage the common talk, and these songs were written in 'very hard Irish, full of ould strong words.'

I should like to send the literary Irishmen of my acquaintance one by one to converse with James Kelly as a salutary discipline. He was perfectly courteous, but through his courtesy there pierced a kind of toleration that carried home to one's mind a profound conviction of ignorance. People talk about the servility of the Irish peasant. Here was a man who professed his inability to read or write, but stood perfectly secure in his sense of superior education. His respect for me grew evidently when he found me familiar with the details of more stories than he expected. I was raised to the level of a hopeful pupil. They had been put into English, I told him. 'Oh, ay, they would be, in a sort of a way,' said James, with a fine scorn. Soon we broke new ground, for James

had by heart not only the Fenian or Ossianic cycle, but also the older Sagas of Cuchulain. He confused the cycles, it is true, taking the Red Branch heroes for contemporaries of the Fianna, which is much as if one should make Heracles meet Odysseus or Achilles in battle ; but he had these earlier legends by heart, a rare acquirement among the Shanachies of to-day.

Here then was a type of the Irish illiterate. A man somewhere between fifty and sixty, at a guess ; of middle height, spare and well-knit, high-nosed, fine-featured, keen-eyed ; standing there on his own ground, courteous and even respectful, yet consciously a scholar ; one who had travelled too—had worked in England and Scotland, and could tell me that the Highland Gaelic was far nearer to the language of the old days than the Irish of to-day ; finally, one who could recite without apparent effort long narrative poems in a dead literary dialect. When I find an English workman who can stand up and repeat the works of Chaucer by heart, then and not till then I shall see an equivalent for James Kelly.

And yet it would be a different thing entirely. Chaucer has never survived in oral tradition. But in the West of Donegal, whence James Kelly's father emigrated to where I found his son, every old person had this literature in mind, and my friend was no exception. It is among the younger generation, who have been taught in the National Schools (surely the most ironic of all titles), that the language and the history of the nation are dying out. Yet that is changing. For instance, James

Kelly's son reads and writes Irish, and may perhaps help me to note down some of his father's lore.

For it was late when I came to him, and though he pressed me (not knowing even my name) to stay the night, I had to depart for that day, after I had heard him recite in the traditional chant some staves of an Ossianic lay, and sing to a traditional air Carolan's famous lyric, 'The Lord of Mayo.' We drank a glass of whisky from my flask, a cup of tea that his wife made; and as we went into the house he asked a favour in a whisper. It was that I should eat plenty of his good woman's butter. He escorted me a good way over the hill, for, said he, when I had come that far to see him, it was the least that he should put me a piece on my road, and he exhorted me to come again for 'a good crack together.' And if I deferred visiting him for another year that was largely because I did not like to face again this illiterate without acquiring a little more knowledge.

Let it be understood this is no exceptional case. In every three or four parishes along the Western seaboard and for twenty miles inland, from Donegal to Kerry, there is the like of James Kelly to be found. It may be that in another fifty years not one of these Shanachies will linger; education will have made a clean sweep of illiteracy. And yet again, it may be that by that time, not only in the Western baronies but through the length and breadth of Ireland, both song and story and legend will be living again on the lips and in the hearts of the people. *Go leigidh Dia sin.*

THE REVIVAL OF A LANGUAGE.

THE modern conception of civilisation seems to involve the agglomeration of communities into vast masses, all governed by the same institutions and all speaking the same language ; and there are those who exult in the fact that English, of all competitors, has the best chance to become, in the cant term, a world-speech, doing away with the curse of Babel, to the immense advantage of people who buy and sell. I cannot understand this enthusiasm. Neither the pidgin-English of China, nor the trade-English of West Africa, nor the delectable dialect of the Wall-street broker, kindles in me the least glow of satisfaction. I am a Little Englander in the matter of language ; and every extension of a speech beyond the limits in which it originally took shape seems to take from it something of its essential character and beauty. It becomes less and less an appropriate instrument for embodying thought and imagination, and more and more a convenient tool in the business of barter and money-making. Latin and Greek literature ceased to be interesting in proportion as the languages grew cosmopolitan.

The great things of the intellectual world have been done mostly by the small communities.

On the other hand, many people in many parts of the world are possessed with the desire to resist the progress of the great steam rollers that are flattening out racial, local, and parochial differences. They do not want to see, in Musset's phrase, a world beardless and hairless spin through space like a monstrous pumpkin. In certain cases, as in Finland for example, the struggle has a political complexion; a subject people holds to what it believes will be the key to deliver it from its chains. But in most instances the motives are primarily sentimental, though sentiment in this instance as in so many proves to be wisdom in disguise. The desire to preserve national characteristics is a form of self-respect, and self-respect, as we all know, makes for prosperity. Pride of race need not be fed by hatred, and one of the most remarkable of all these revivals, that of the Provençal tongue, is perfectly free from any suggestion of a racial hostility. 'I love my village more than thy village, I love my Provence more than thy Province, I love France more than all,' writes Félix Gras, one of the leaders in the movement, quoted by Mr. Downer in his excellent little book on Frédéric Mistral. And Mistral himself, so eloquent on the need for fostering the local life, is eloquent too upon the need for the wider racial union.

For the brook must flow to the sea, and the stone must fall on the

heap; the wheat is best protected from the treacherous wind when planted close; and the little boats, if they are to navigate safely, when the waves are black and the air dark, must sail together. For it is good to be many, it is a fine thing to say, 'We are children of France.'

Unluckily, the movement nearest to my mind, the revival of the Gaelic tongue in Ireland, springs under less kindly auspices. Dislike of England as well as love of Ireland enters into it. Nevertheless, the resentment that encourages Irishmen to promote national industries, to revive their ancient tongue, and to study their past history and store of legends, is a very much more useful feeling than the resentment which sits sullenly asserting that nothing but the Act of Union stands between Ireland and the millennium. And it would be misleading to assert that the feeling against England, rather than the feeling for Ireland, has been the spring of the movement. Protestants and Unionists have been prominent in it. In Belfast, where the Gaelic League has several thousand members, the president of the League is a Protestant; and one of the best known opponents of Home Rule, the late Dr. Kane, joined the League, saying that he might be an Orangeman, but he did not wish to forget that he was an O'Cahan. If there were no question at all of the Act of Union—if Ireland were separated from England—the Gaelic League's work would be no whit less desirable, no whit less necessary, than it is to-day. It cannot be too strongly urged that the Gaelic revival is not a craze, nor even an isolated attempt to

restore what is threatened with extinction. The Czechs in Bohemia have done what the Irish are attempting to do, and we do not hear that they see cause to regret it. But we need not go so far afield to look for an example. Of four Celtic peoples now existing, one only is prosperous, and that is the one stock which has clung to and cultivated its Celtic tongue. The Welsh have a great asset in their minerals, it is true; but they have a finer wealth in their disciplined intelligence; they are an educated business people, and they know what their language is worth to them. Consequently, while Gaelic has been dying out, Welsh has been gaining a hold which increased with the spread of education. The need for fostering a distinct national life lies deeper than the need for resistance to any arbitrary set of political conditions, such as the Union imposes; and Irishmen, as well as all who are interested in the Celtic revival, will find in Mr. Downer's account of *Mistral* and the *Félibrige* a suggestive parallel, that illuminates both the spirit and the method of the Gaelic League. That parallel one may endeavour to draw out.

The Provençal speech, once the vehicle of a brilliant literature, had lapsed, after the devastation of the Albigensian wars, into the position of a mere patois. A few peasant songs were still written in it, and before the efforts of *Mistral* and his fellows, *Jasmin* had composed in it poems which won the praise of *Sainte-Beuve*. *Roumanille*, a native of *Saint-Rémy*, born in

1818, conceived definitely the idea of saving from destruction the beautiful *langue d'oc*; and providence threw in his way the instrument. In 1845 he met with Frédéric Mistral, then a boy of fifteen, son of a farmer whose home lay near the village of Maillane in the plain at the foot of the Alpilles. The boy had already a tenderness for the speech in which his mother sang her songs to him, and the ridicule of his class-mates in the school at Avignon had only strengthened this feeling. Already he was trying to render into Provençal the Eclogues of Virgil which recalled so vividly to his mind the life on the plains of Maillane. Then he met Roumanille, who showed him his poems 'Li Margarideto' (*Les Marguérites*, the Daisies). Before this, any passage of modern Provençal that he had met in print had been only given as the grotesque dialect of clowns. He went home and began a poem; but his father sent him (like Ovid) from verse-making to study law. He returned home *licencié en droit* (called to the Bar, as we should say), and was given his freedom. Then the young man devoted his life, half a century ago, to the glorification of his native tongue. Mistral set to work on the composition of 'Miréio,' which appeared in 1859, and was hailed with acclamation by Lamartine, crowned by the Academy, and made the subject of Gounod's opera. The language was lucky; it had found a poet, who from the very first raised modern Provençal literature into an indisputable existence.

Irish literature will have a harder fight to establish itself than the Provençal. The Irish, in so far as they are, or have been, or may become a bi-lingual people, must be so in a very different sense from the *Méridionaux* of France. Any one who knows French and Italian can with a dictionary and a few hints spell out the meaning of what Mistral writes; and the idiom, according to Mr. Downer, is so near the French that translation is little more than a substitution of word for word. The spelling too, as in all Latin tongues, offers no difficulty. But Irish is of course a language differing entirely in construction and vocabulary from English, and, to add to the trouble, is encumbered with a system of orthography, subtle and logical indeed, but elaborate and cumbrous. The difference in the written character makes another obstacle, though a slight one. Practically, therefore, one may be sure that any prose or poetry produced in Irish will only be read by Gaelic speakers; if it makes its way to English students of literature, it will be only known through the medium of translations. Yet there is no language so difficult or so little known, but genius can over-leap the barrier it imposes. Who reads Russian, Danish, Polish? yet Tolstoi, Ibsen, Sienkiewicz, have an audience throughout Europe. Who for that matter reads Provençal? but I bought this year a novel by Félix Gras at a book-stall in Letterkenny. And in any case literature is not produced for export, and the greatest poets have written for a public that

was, so far as they knew, strictly limited in numbers. It is safe to say that either of two things would save the Irish tongue from all danger of dying out. The first cannot be looked for,—a prohibition of its use. On the second, therefore, all hopes must be founded, — the appearance of a really great writer who should write in Gaelic.

This is, as has been said, where the revival in Provence was lucky. The poet came to hand at once; and, apart from ‘Miréio,’ no one who reads even in a translation the noble ‘Penitential Psalm’ called forth by the war of 1870 can question the genius of its author. But failing this special intervention of providence on behalf of a language, organisation has a power, and there is much of interest and of profitable example in the proceedings of the Félibrige. What exactly is meant by this mysterious word most people are in doubt. Etymologies from the Greek, the Spanish, the Irish even, have been offered,—*philabros*, *philebraios*, *feligres* (that is *filiî ecclesiæ*), and so on. But the essential fact is that Mistral found an old Provençal hymn describing how the Virgin discovered Jesus among ‘the seven Félibres of the Law,’ and he adopted the word to designate the seven poets who came together on May 21st, 1854, to consult for the rehabilitation of the Provençal tongue. The Félibrige, or League of the Félibres, was not founded till more than twenty years later.

What then was Mistral’s procedure? He took,

to begin with, a living language that was spoken about him. The dialect of the troubadours was, it appears, the Limousin. Mistral took the dialect of Saint Rémy, or rather of Maillane. But the first meetings of the Félibres were held to discuss questions of grammar and orthography; for the language they were to work in was one that had long ceased to be used for any literary purpose. Taking a single dialect for basis, this is what, according to Mr. Downer, they have done.

They have regularised the spelling, and have deliberately eliminated as far as possible words and forms that appeared to them to be due to French influence, substituting older and more genuine forms,—forms that appeared more in accord with the genius of the *langue d'oc* as contrasted with the *langue d'oïl*. . . . The second step taken arose from the necessity of making this speech of the illiterate capable of elevated expression. Mistral claims to have used no word unknown to the people or unintelligible to them, with the exception that he has used freely of the stock of learned words common to the whole Romance family of languages. These words, too, he transforms more or less, keeping them in harmony with the forms peculiar to the *langue d'oc*. Hence, it is true that the language of the Félibres is a conventional literary language that does not represent exactly the speech of any section of France, and is related to the popular speech more or less as any official language is to the dialects that underlie it.

The same may, however, be said of English or of any written language, and it is to be noted that as the movement has spread the different dialects included in its sphere have asserted their own claims, and, since 1874, have been admitted in the competitions. But the point to emphasize is that the language of Mistral is based on a dialect, but a dialect purified and enlarged. For the poet, in his enthusiasm for the

tongue of his birthplace, did not limit himself to demonstrating its fitness for literary uses. He spent, Mr. Downer tells us, a quarter of a century 'journeying about among all classes of people, questioning workmen and sailors, asking them the names they applied to the objects they use, recording their proverbial expressions, noting their peculiarities of pronunciation, listening to the songs of the peasants.' The result was his great dictionary 'Lou Tresor dou Félibrige,' which professes to contain all the words used in Southern France, with the dialect forms of each, their etymology and synonyms. Grammar is included by giving the conjugation of the verbs, &c.; so are explanations as to customs, manners, traditions, and beliefs. In short, Mistral made a dictionary not only of the language but of the culture of the people, which aims at including all that is necessary to the understanding of modern Provençal literature.

This brief account indicates sufficiently, I think, the character of the literary language written by the Félibres, and the means taken to develop it. The facts have a certain resemblance to those of the Gaelic revival, but the difference is to the advantage of the Irish. If the Provençal tongue be worth reviving, then the Irish is much more worth reviving, as being the richest in records of any of the old Celtic tongues, any one of which has a continuous history going back for many ages before the dialects of Latin took shape even in common speech. Yet nothing is more hotly

debated in Ireland than just this point—the value of the language, and the literature.

So far as the outside public can gather, the history of Irish falls into three parts. First, that of the Old Irish, spoken and written before the great Danish invasions of about the ninth century. This tongue survives only in certain glosses on the margin of Latin manuscripts, but its linguistic perfection is the joy of philologists. Dr. Atkinson would desire to encourage the learning of Irish among students of philology (whose morals can presumably withstand contact with a literature which he, alone of all mankind, asserts to be grossly indecent) chiefly for the sake of these remnants. Secondly, there is the Middle Irish, which represents the literary standard of the tongue as it was established between the tenth and twelfth centuries—a period of great literary activity—and maintained for literary purposes, by the order of Irish bards and historians till the sixteenth century. Thirdly, there is the modern tongue, which differs from Middle Irish much as contemporary English differs from the language of Chaucer.

There survives in the Middle Irish a very copious literature, much of it probably dating from several centuries earlier, but reshaped into modified speech. This literature comprises the Red Branch cycle of which I have written in another essay, and the still more affluent Ossianic group of song and story; and also, it seems, a great variety of miscellaneous lyric and narrative, most of it still only

accessible in manuscript. All this matter is of undoubted interest to scholars and to archæologists. It is also, in my opinion, literature of very great beauty and charm, with a strongly-marked individuality, and few lovers of poetry could be indifferent to it. But for the ordinary Irishman or Irishwoman, whom it is proposed to educate, or merely to delight, by the revival of these old tales, it will be found, I think, that the literature has a special appeal. I judge by myself; the memories that haunt the Irish mountains and shores, from Ben Bulbin to Ben Edair, waken my imagination with a more living touch than all that is told with greater art of an alien Thessaly, and Tara is more to me than Camelot. France may admire Mistral; but it is for Provence that he describes the life and scenery of Provence, and for Provence that he weaves into his poems the history and traditions of his own country. The value of a literature lies in its power to interest, and no literature and no history can be to any country what are the history of its own race or the literature that sprang from its soil. Few serious thinkers will deny that every civilized man should be familiar with the history of his own race, and it is at least doubtful whether that familiarity is possible without a knowledge of the racial tongue.

And it is not history alone that is needed. M. Darmesteter writes in a fine passage, translated by Mr. Downer :—

A nation needs poetry : it lives not by bread alone, but in the ideal as well. Religious beliefs are weakening ; and if the sense of poetic

ideals dies along with the religious sentiment, there will remain nothing among the lower classes but material and brutal instincts.

Whether the *Félibres* were conscious of this danger, or met the popular need instinctively, I cannot say. At any rate, their work is a good one and a wholesome one. There still circulates, down to the lowest stratum of the people, a stream of poetry, often obscure, until now looked upon with disdain by all except scholars. I mean folklore, beliefs, traditions and popular tales. Before this source of poetry could disappear completely, the *Félibres* had a happy idea of taking it up, giving it a new literary form, thus giving back to the people, clothed in the brilliant colours of poetry, the creation of the people themselves.

With very few alterations, this should hold good of the work that is being done by the Gaelic revival in Ireland. It will be asked by Englishmen why these people, all of whom speak English, cannot find their account in English poetry. The simplest answer is the fact: they do not, and they cannot. What they take from England is the worst, not the best; and that is true even of the men of genius among them. Neither Carleton nor Banim was able to assimilate the virtues of English literature; the merit in their tales lies in the Irish qualities, the defects lie in the tawdry and superficial tricks of style picked up from the flashiest models. Nor is this only true of Ireland. Mr. Baring Gould, in a recently published '*Book of Brittany*,' devotes a page to Théodore Botrel, the son of a blacksmith, and a Breton poet. And this is M. Botrel's account of his own objects:—

We are menaced with a great evil. Not only is the Breton tongue threatened, but the Breton soul itself. That flower of sentiment which was its beauty is ready to shrivel up at contact with a materialistic civilisation. Vulgar songs are penetrating throughout the land of the saints, brought home from the barrack and dropped by

commercial travellers. I have done what I can to substitute for these depressing compositions something that shall smell of the broom and contain a waft of the soil.

The reason for the fact here attested, and attested by many witnesses in Ireland, is I think admirably given in a passage from Alphonse Daudet's words in commendation of Mistral's work, rendered by Mr. Downer:—

It is a bad thing to become wholly loosened from the soil, to forget the village church-spire. Curiously enough, poetry attaches only to objects that have come down to us, that have had long use. What is called *progress*, a vague and very doubtful term, rouses the lower parts of our intelligence. The higher parts vibrate the better for what has moved and inspired a long series of imaginative minds, inheriting each from a predecessor, strengthened by sight of the same landscapes, by the same perfumes, by the touch of the same furniture polished by wear. Very ancient impressions sink into the depths of that obscure memory which we may call the race-memory, out of which is woven the mass of individual memories.

That is the plea for the study of a literature based on the old traditions, the old history, and the old beliefs of the race, and written in the old tongue, but in the modern form of that tongue. Here again there is a conflict of opinion over the value of Irish. The written language altered materially after the break-up of the old order when Ireland was completely crushed and conquered under Elizabeth and James. Up to that time the order of the bards had subsisted as a professional literary class, and had rigidly maintained a literary idiom growing gradually more and more divorced from common speech. During the first half of the seventeenth century, in the general break-up, a

man called Keating departed from the tradition and wrote in popular Irish a history of Ireland, and other works. That was the beginning (according to Dr. Hyde) of a new literature which circulated surreptitiously in manuscript throughout Ireland, and received continual additions both in prose and verse. These manuscripts abounded all over the country, but more specially in Munster; poverty, and the apathy born of poverty, did their work better in Ulster and Connaught. Then came the blow of the famine, which fell chiefly on the Irish-speakers, and the continuity of the literary tradition was for the first time snapped. The heart was out of the people, and for a time they made up their minds that the way of salvation lay in becoming Anglicised. The institution of National Schools killed out the hedge-schoolmasters, many of whom had taught in Irish; the parents opposed themselves strongly to the use of Irish by their children, and a generation brought up without a knowledge how to read or write Irish¹ lost the

¹ The rules of the Board of Education everywhere permitted a teacher to teach Irish-speaking children in Irish, but no attempt was made to see that this was done, nor to provide Irish-speaking teachers, though the advisability of doing so was repeatedly urged. The practice was almost universally to teach children who had never heard English spoken till they came to school the rudiments of reading and writing in English. The result was that the scholars learned little, forgot quickly what they learned, and became the illiterate peasantry that they are to-day. Now some attempt is being made to follow the precedent which has been set with great success in Wales, and teach Irish-speakers through the medium of Irish. The Board of Education is, however, sluggish in the matter, and the outlying peasantry are, as will be seen, little touched by the revival as yet.

respect for the Irish manuscripts which were destroyed by thousands. And, though the tongue survived, it is only within our own day that a revival of pride in the tongue and its possessions has induced men to print the work of seventeenth and eighteenth century poets like Egan O'Rahilly, Shan Clarach MacDonnell, and Owen Roe O'Sullivan, whose poems, now reprinted by the Gaelic League, have found a wide circulation in the least book-buying of all English-speaking countries.

But, as was natural in the absence of a written literature, divergence of dialects has accentuated itself; and one of the questions hotly fought out concerns the very existence of the language. Dr. Atkinson denies that there is such a thing as a standard of the tongue; he refuses the title of Irish to what Dr. Hyde writes, it is 'an imbroglio, a mélange, an omnium gatherum.' Dr. Hyde retorts that an Ulster and a Kerry peasant talking Gaelic together differ no more in speech from one another than they would have differed when talking English; and, further, that what he has written in the idiom used by educated Connaughtmen can be understood and enjoyed by Gaelic speakers in any part of the island. He cites testimony which seems conclusive. It is much to be wished that Dr. Atkinson, who knows all languages, would institute a comparison between the Provençal as it was when Mistral and his fellows took it in hand and the Irish when Dr. Hyde began his work. To judge from Mr. Downer's book it would appear that the notion of using

Provençal as a literary medium had dropped out of men's minds altogether till first Jasmin, and then Roumanille, took it up; whereas in Ireland there still was, and is, in oral circulation, a large body of folk-song and folk-tale, and in manuscript a considerable quantity of stories, histories, and poems.

The question for the educational authorities to consider, whether they should or should not encourage the study of Irish among young people not born to speak it, has been reduced to three heads. First, that of practical or commercial utility, which may be at once set aside. Consideration of these ends usually defeats itself, and the knowledge of French, for example, which a boy is likely to acquire at school, will scarcely ever bring him in a penny. Shorthand, or typewriting, would be more marketable. But education, as has been excellently said, differs from apprenticeship; the object is to help the mind to grow, and to teach the learner how to use his faculty of learning. The second aspect of the question concerns the value of Irish as an 'educative implement'—admitting, what is generally admitted, that the disinterested study of some language is an excellent means of education. On this matter there is grave and reasonable dispute; neither the grammar nor the spelling of the language, as it exists to-day, can be said to be settled, and these difficulties are magnified tenfold by the necessity of national examination. Here it must be noted that the Irish are claiming what was not claimed in Provence—

that Government should subsidise the movement. Nevertheless, the Welsh instance is the one really for imitation, and one has only to say that the Gaelic League might do worse than elect a committee like that of the Félibrige and authorise it to fix a standard of spelling and of grammar. Once the material difficulties are got over—and they are very great difficulties for a state system, though insignificant for individual teaching—I cannot believe but that the educational authorities will show more good-will. For, on the third debated point—the value of the language as a key to literature—no one proposes to put it into serious comparison with French or German. But the experts now begin to notice what hitherto they had overlooked altogether—the special value that Irish literature has for Irish people. The study begun at school or college is by no means so likely to be dropped in later life as that of any foreign language; of its power of stimulating interest and intellectual enthusiasm the Gaelic League is there to testify.

This League is the most interesting and significant outgrowth of Nationalism that Ireland has seen in my time. It is not political, but it is national; that is to say, it aims at fostering by all means the distinct and separate national life of Ireland. It is in close sympathy with the industrial movement led by Mr. Plunkett, and aspires, like Mr. Plunkett, to keep Irishmen in Ireland by making life there more prosperous and more attractive. These two movements differ from others in that

they are constructive not destructive ; they do not cry *Down with everything*, or anything ; they try to build or rebuild. In a sense the Gaelic League is the more interesting, as it is the less utilitarian, though any one who has followed the work of Mr. Plunkett and his associates knows well that they appeal to men's more generous emotions as well as to their pockets. But, grossly considered, the industrial movement is, like the Land League and its successors, a movement to put money into the pocket of Irish farmers and peasants. It differs from them in not proposing to do this by taking it out of the pockets of landlords. The Gaelic League aims at an object which is partly sentimental, if you like, but in reality educational in the highest degree—at a revival of the national life on its intellectual side. It appeals to Nationalism in its finest form, and it has met with most response where Nationalism has in the past been least profitable. The townsmen have made nothing out of their principles, the farmers have pocketed a solid reduction in rent, and a solid lump sum for tenant-right. It is the townsmen who are supporting the Gaelic League.

I have given in another paper my personal experience of the League and its methods ; here I am only concerned with generalities. But above all it must be remembered that this whole movement is a growth of the last few years. Fifteen years ago, ten even, Dr. Hyde was a voice crying in the wilderness. Now he has not only his League with its far-reaching organisation (even in London

it has a membership of two thousand) but he has the Church at his back. Readers of Father Sheehan's 'My New Curate' will remember the priest's opinion of the cheap literature that is hawked about; and the Church has wisely accepted the best means of combating this vulgarising and demoralising agency. And lastly, the League has secured at least the formal support of Mr. Redmond and his party, many of whom are already strong for it, though many, and those not the least influential, are by long habit inclined to think of nothing but the land-question in all its details, and (in shadowy outline) the parliament on College Green.

The movement, like everything else in Ireland (or for that matter like any other product of a generous enthusiasm), has its droll side; a new Daudet has a new Tarascon before him. But these absurdities are only on the surface. Fundamentally the movement is admirable. It is allied with the industrial propaganda which every sensible Irishman applauds; it is allied with a crusade against the curse of drunkenness; it is allied with the attempt to create a national dramatic literature, headed by Mr. Yeats; it is giving to the people a keen intellectual interest, which is all the more likely to thrive because it is taken partly as a pastime, partly as an expression of the most genuine patriotism. And though the peasantry who have the language actually in their keeping, who are the true repositories of the national tradition, are slow to move, in Ireland as elsewhere, yet it is impos-

sible that they can be long indifferent to the renewal of their language which they habitually discuss and appreciate as few Englishmen, but many Frenchmen, discuss and appreciate their own speech. More than once I have heard a Connaughtman speak of the pleasure it was to hear such a one of his acquaintance recite a poem in Irish: 'He had the right way of it, surely.' And again and again I have heard them deplore the falling off among the younger folk in correctness of diction and even in accent. 'They do not seem to be able to twisht their tongues round it, the way we used to,' one of them said to me the other day. And in the last couple of years the change is notable. A while back, in the West of Donegal, no one had heard of the movement; this year there was nothing the people were more ready to discuss than the Irish teaching in the schools. They have lost, too, it is said, the notion which time and the world had driven deep into them, that to speak Irish was a sign of savagery.

The change is only beginning, but it has begun. I see no reason to doubt, but every reason to believe that there will come into being a new literature in the old tongue; and this literature will be as it was in Provence, the work of men with whom poetry or writing is a cult or passion, not a trade. Such men will turn with hope and emulation to survey the work done by Mistral and his fellow-workers; and to them may be commended the sonnet prefixed by Mistral to his great dictionary. I transcribe the sestet of it, to give the reader some notion of this

splendid daughter of the Latin, with its sonorous double rhymes and profusion of stately words. Mistral speaks of his own work, and gives thanks like the ploughman or the shepherd on the eve of St. John :—

En terro, fin qu'au sistre, a cava moun araire ;
E lou brounze rouman e l'or dis empeaire
Treluson au soulèu dintre lou blad que sort. . . .

O pople dóu Miejour, escouto moun arengo :
Se vos reconquista l'emperi de ta lengo,
Pèr t'arnesca de nõu, pesco en aquéu Tresor.

My plough has dug into the soil down to the rock ; and the Roman bronze and the gold of the Emperors gleam in the sunlight among the growing wheat.

Oh people of the South, heed my saying : If you wish to win back the Empire of your language, equip yourselves anew by drawing upon this Treasury.

Under the speech of the peasants, the speech that grows like corn in the fields, lie buried treasures from an older world of great kings and great artists, the words and the phrases and the thoughts of an ancient and illustrious civilisation ; and these Mistral has brought again to the light of day, no longer to 'rust unburnished,' but to 'shine in use.' Under the soil in Ireland also there lie bronze and gold treasures, richer and more ancient than those of Provence, and Dr. Hyde in his ploughing may be as fortunate as Mistral.

THE GAELIC LEAGUE AND THE IRISH THEATRE.

ANY Monday evening in the winter months there is a gathering of some two hundred and fifty people—learners and teachers—at a public hall near the Tottenham Court-road. And what they are learning and teaching is the old tongue of Ireland—the Gaelic. Probably Englishmen would not realise how surprising this fact seems to a person brought up in Ireland, where twenty years ago the notion of any sane human being sitting down to acquire Irish would have seemed scarcely less extraordinary than a voluntary study of Chinese. Yet here to-day is a movement on foot which has not only taken strong hold on the big towns in Ireland (each Whitsun-week sees in Dublin a great assemblage for the *Oireachtas*, which may be compared to the *jeux floraux* of Provence and the *Félibrige*) but has actually spread across the water, so that the Gaelic League in London numbers nearly two thousand members. And directly one begins to attend a class it is apparent how the thing has been done.

In the first place, by enthusiasm. At St.

Andrew's Hall you will find a matter of twelve classes, graduated according to proficiency, with a man teaching each of them. Each of those teachers does his day's work at some place of business before he comes to keep a score of beginners up to the effort of tackling a difficult language. And, what is more, many of these men give not one night a week but two or three, for there are classes all over London. And they give their services with all the zeal of those who labour for love.

In the second place, the thing is done by common-sense and practical talent. Common-sense has arranged a series of little paper-covered books of 'Lessons in Irish.' There are five of them; each book costs sixpence, and it is your duty to carry it in your pocket for study in omnibuses or trains. These introductory manuals of pronunciation, phrases, and grammar, written by Father O'Growney and published by the Gaelic League, are simply excellent; they make a rough way smooth. The learner is led along without being frightened, and picks up from the first a few sentences, that he can display on occasion. A case in point will illustrate the working of the whole propaganda. I had the honour to belong to a centre opened some time ago at Fulham. Here were assembled quite a number of Irish-speakers, most of them working-men. Indeed, the betwixt and between element of learners who had made some progress was only represented by myself and two or three others: there were the

native speakers, and there was a big class of beginners, ranging from little boys and girls of ten to one old man of seventy. On the second night of the class a League committee meeting kept away most of the regular teachers, and the beginners' class was handed over to a tall young Kerry man, who certainly looked little enough like a schoolmaster. In the course of his instructions he went out to get a piece of chalk for blackboard work, and came back, leaving the door open. Instantly there were a dozen voices shouting at him—male voices, female voices, young and old—'Dún an doras' ('Shut the door'), which happens to be about the first sentence in Father O'Growney's first book. Well, I never saw a teacher look better pleased than he, as he turned and did as he was bid, then came over to harangue them with his soft Kerry voice and lazy Kerry smile, 'It's talking Irish altogether you'll be then.' There you have a main secret of it—the providing a framework of elementary instruction so excellent that almost anyone can learn and almost anyone can teach, up to a certain point; and add to that, so much of good-will both in learner and teacher, that the lesson is taken in the spirit of play.

But the League show their shrewdness in invoking otherwise the same spirit. From half-past seven to eight at the St. Andrew's Hall you would find an energetic young lady drilling some seventy or eighty pupils in the singing of Irish songs. From eight to a quarter-past nine the

language classes are hard at work. Then, with the greatest alacrity, the floor is cleared, and the young people fall to dancing Irish dances to Irish airs. Last summer when a big Irish concert was given in the Queen's Hall, four couples from the London branch of the League took the floor and danced four-handed reels to the apparent delight of the big audience, and of the quaint old Connaughtman who played the pipes for them. At Fulham, however, there is no room for dancing, the class being held in a Catholic school blocked up with desks; and so when work is over the diversion is to demand songs from the native speakers. They produce from the repertory of their recollection long ballads, singing them with an odd suggestion of the bagpipe's drone. I cannot testify further, being wholly ignorant of music; but I hear much talk of the 'traditional style.'

'Tradition' is the keyword of the whole movement. What the leaders are trying to save is the traditional language, literature, lore, music, dances, and sports of the Irish peasant. The peasant is the schoolmaster of the movement, and an incidental part of the revival is a vehement protest against the Irish peasant of English tradition—the 'stage Irishman.' Even Mr. Denis O'Sullivan, most popular of singers at an Irish concert, excites the suspicion of purists when he sings and acts the song of the Irish fiddler, written by an ornament of the Irish revival, Mr. Fahy; and in San Francisco, where also

the Gaelic League have a strong footing, he was soundly hissed for taking part in 'The Shaughraun.' This is sheer fanaticism doubtless, but no movement goes far without its fanatics, and it is to be hoped that this movement will go a long way. If anyone asks why, the answer is ready. First, the Gaelic League is a means of bringing Irish folk of all sorts together on the pleasantest terms ; it provides for its members an intellectual stimulus worth a wilderness of University Extension Lectures ; and, with that, it affords a good deal of mild gaiety, for every branch of the League organises its *pléraca*, *scoruidheacht seilg*, dance, concert, or what not. In short, in the old cant phrase, it combines instruction with amusement. More seriously, the League represents a principle which many of us in these days think of vital importance. It aims at maintaining the living symbol of nationality, at encouraging love of race and pride of race in a world whose ideal seems to tend towards the creation of cosmopolitan financiers and whose drift is to denationalise.

However, the serious side is not accentuated ; most of us join for diversion, and a very good diversion I have found the study of a language which is difficult certainly, but the difficulty has been absurdly exaggerated. Taking the thing easy, and only giving a little spare time daily to it, one ought at the end of six months to read a simple piece of Irish quite readily ; for instance, one of Dr. Hyde's delightful comedies, half prose,

half verse. And whoever reads them will find a real humour, real pathos, and an exquisite melody of verse that should repay any lover of literature for the trouble of learning. Every language has its own peculiar charm, which lends itself to the literature written in that language, and the Irish seems to possess a singular beauty—at least, for an Irishman. My best gratitude is due to the London police-constable who was my first preceptor in it.

Nevertheless, one man does not make a literature—though between his own writings and his collected material Dr. Hyde makes a fine show—and it must be admitted that the books to be had in modern Irish are as yet few. The poets of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries seem to have more melody than substantial beauty of thought; and there is little prose except folk tale. Father O'Leary has adapted *Æsop* with a talent fit to rank with La Fontaine's; and his fables are as Irish as La Fontaine's are French. But there is no denying that an active student could exhaust within a few months the whole of what is to be had in modern Irish, and in any case the most devout Gaelic Leaguer is at least as familiar with English as with the older tongue. For the present, and for the next generation at least, the national literature must be written in English.

There is plenty of it, the Anglo-Irish literature, especially of the verse; and its vogue and influence has been great. Most of us find it hard to criticise the work of such men as Duffy and Davis, whose poems were the delight of our

childhood. But criticism shows them, I think, to be a kind of inspired journalism ; at best, poetry in the same class as Macaulay's 'Lays,' and a good class it is in its way. I have tried to show elsewhere grounds for thinking that work of a much higher type is being done to-day ; but here I would call attention to a definite and fruitful literary propaganda.

Four years ago Mr. Yeats, with certain other men of letters, conceived the idea of attempting in Dublin what had proved nearly impossible in London—to organise dramatic performances with a view to producing literature and not to making money. They interested a great many personages in the enterprise, and the Irish Literary Theatre started with a list of guarantors on which figured Mr. Lecky and Mr. John O'Leary, Lord Ardilaun and Miss Maud Gonne. Mr. Yeats himself and Mr. Edward Martyn were the dramatists of the first year, and the result was interesting. Mr. Martyn's 'Heather Field' made a great impression, modified somewhat by the incongruity of the English actors in Irish parts. Mr. Yeats's 'Countess Cathleen,' however, awakened an unlooked for storm. The notion of a noble Irish lady selling her soul to the devil to save the lives of her starving people was pronounced to be blasphemous, even though the devil is cheated in the end. And feeling ran so high that at the first performance of a play by Mr. Yeats in Dublin, policemen were brought in to keep order. It seems a little droll to-day to think of that.

Next year there was no such hitch; but no great enthusiasm was roused either by Mr. Martyn's 'Maeve' or Miss Milligan's 'Last Feast of the Fianna.' Interest concentrated on 'The Bending of the Bough'—a satirical comedy of Irish political life, adapted by Mr. George Moore from an original work of Mr. Martyn's (since published as 'The Tale of a Town'). The play provided a good many caps that could be fitted conjecturably on to heads in the audience; and it was a sound idea to act on the principle that an ounce of local allusion is worth a pound of wit. Nevertheless in literary comedy there must be a quantum of wit, and the quantum was scantily provided. Essentially, however, it was a comedy of Irish local affairs played by English actors, and written by an Irishman who had lost touch with his country. In the third and last year of its existence the Irish Literary Theatre again relied on English actors when Mr. Benson's company produced 'Diarmuid and Grania'—the work of Mr. Yeats and Mr Moore, in collaboration; and the result was not happy. But each performance of this tragedy was followed by Dr. Hyde's 'Casadh an tSugáin,' played by the author and other members of the Gaelic League. The enormous advantage of having Irish players to interpret Irish pieces would have been apparent, I think, even without Dr. Hyde's astonishingly clever acting. And with these performances the Irish Literary Theatre, which began as a subsidised and rather genteel institution, and ended as nothing in particular, died a natural death. Mr. Yeats

who had been the one positive force in it found a new and more living medium in the Irish National Dramatic Company: a troupe headed by a skilled artisan, and consisting entirely of persons who worked at acting as their recreation—just as people work at cricket. The result has been, on however small a scale, the creation of a genuine national theatre.

There has been existing in London for three years now a Stage Society, whose purpose is the production of plays which have talent but have not a commercial future. It consists of a collection of very clever people, and can draw on a wide field; yet it has not produced anything in English—except certain plays by Mr. Shaw, written long before the Society came into being—at all so good as three or four of the plays which Mr. Fay and his company have given to the world; that is, to the small public which cares for intelligent drama.

They have acted in all half-a-dozen plays on Irish subjects, and of these two stand out—Mr. Ryan's two-act comedy, 'The Laying of Foundations,' and Mr. Yeats's 'Cathleen ní Houlihan.' The former is a pungent satire upon municipal corruption, and it strikes not the English nor the Unionists, but the Nationalist politicians. It strikes hard with the clear sword of irony, and does well one of the two works proper to a national drama—the chastising of what is ignoble in the nation. The counterpart to this is Mr. Yeats's beautiful little symbolic tragedy, which shows the peasant home to which, in 1798, comes the Sean Bhean

Bhocht, or, as the songs call her, Cathleen ní Houlihan, to call away a bridegroom from his bride, and draw him after her in the service that has led so many to ruin and failure, but not to despair—to condemnation, but to undying honour. The spirit of Ireland, ever defeated yet undefeated—in love with failure rather than with success—has never been more finely rendered; and the poetic drama found what it cannot find in the heterogeneous multitudes of London, an audience all responsive to a single appeal, which was not merely that of common laughter, common fear, or common desire: which was, in a word, intellectual yet rich in emotion.

If it had not been for the Gaelic League, and its stimulation of a truly national interest, I do not think that this phenomenon of the Irish drama would have come into being. But there it is; and this drama of Irish subjects, written by Irishmen, played by Irishmen and Irishwomen, depending on nothing but the shillings and sixpences of enthusiasts, has to-day more vitality in it, and more possibilities of power, than almost any literary form of the period known to me. Taking them together, the Gaelic League and this Irish drama are strong yeasts flung into the flaccid dough of an Ireland which is yet in the making. What will come of them, even those who are least hopeful may well be curious to see.

THE IRISH PEASANT

IN all modern nations there are two races; the people of the country and the people of the towns. Here one preponderates, there the other; but in England and Ireland, so ill yoked together, we have a union of opposites. For in England the country is nothing, in Ireland it is under existing conditions very nearly all. I have written hitherto of new ferments at work among our people—revival of the language, resuscitation of the old literature, creation of a new poetry. What may be the case in the Ireland of to-morrow, who shall prophesy? but in the Ireland of to-day these forces are only perceptible in the towns. The principal factor in Ireland at this moment—the weightiest if not the most active—is the peasant; the political movement of the last twenty years has been a movement of the peasants (headed by townsmen) for the peasant's material advantage. He has won, or there has been won for him, a legalised interest in his land; but now that the advantage is secured, it becomes questionable how far he is in a state to profit by it. Upon one matter all men in Ireland are agreed; that it is necessary to

educate the peasant, and that slightly more prosperous peasant whom we call the farmer. I have tried to show what Dr. Hyde and Mr. Yeats with their different associates have done to quicken the intellectual life of Ireland ; but their work has lain among, and made itself felt through, the pick of the nation—the men and women who can think and act. In the remaining essays, I shall have to think of Ireland mainly as the home of the Irish peasants.

And what sort of creature is he, this Irish peasant? From the Manchester point of view it must be confessed he has always been a hopeless person: his appliances of comfort to the last degree rudimentary, and his desires wholly unprogressive. He does not aspire to better himself in the world, he wishes to live where his fathers lived before him and as his fathers lived, cherishing their beliefs, their hopes, and their pleasures. It was, however, noticed that, once uprooted from his native soil, he became—that is, if he survived the process—a very different being; in America he prospered, and if he did not amass money, that was generally because he insisted upon sending home his savings, to assist his parents or his kin to prolong in the old spot their miserable existence in defiance of economic laws. And so it seemed to successive Governments, as well as to economists generally, that the best thing to do with the Irish peasant was to civilise him off the face of the earth; to assist emigration rather than restrain it; and by all means to aspire to a state of things

in which whole tracts of country, that carried as things were a large population, should be turned into sheep runs, or game preserves, after the example of happy Scotland.

And yet, now that the Manchester ideas have had free play for half a century, it becomes a question whether the rude instinct of the Gaelic peasant, teaching him to stay where he was, might not with advantage have been respected, and whether after all there was not something in the old view that Government should seek to increase, rather than diminish, the population of the country governed. For, as things stand, the progress of progressive desire in England has left the land bare of tillers; and the scanty supply of agricultural labour is drawn annually in great part from the Irish who linger uneconomically on the fringes of civilisation. From the North and West of Ireland harvesters flock over to England in troops; the end of May sees the steamers filling with them, and September brings them back, each man having saved in that time ten or fifteen pounds out of a weekly wage that runs from fifteen to twenty shillings. During these months they lie about in barns and haylofts, returning year after year as a rule to the same districts; and with autumn they go back to the little cottage—hovel would be a truer word—and find the tiny patch, that they had sown or planted before leaving, perhaps only ripe for reaping, perhaps harvested already by the women and the old men, perhaps battered out of recognition

by rough weather or rotten with the blight. But the money earned across the water pays the little rent, and clears off the account scored up during the year for tea, flour, and sugar, and the other frugal necessities. And in the meantime these people have been helping to solve one of the most urgent problems that Great Britain has to face—how to prevent the accumulation of all workers in great noisome towns. It is worth while to consider whether after all the highest wisdom consists in driving this class of workers—for workers they are, though mainly during summer—into a strange life over seas.

These unprogressive Celts are content with conditions of life that the English working-man despises. They do not demand fresh meat, nor even salt meat daily, they house themselves little better than their cattle, and in many places under the same roof; but they do desire and strive after certain things to which the English working-man is indifferent. They desire clean air, and the familiar face of nature on which their eyes dwell in half-conscious pleasure, as a man's on the features of his wife; they desire to perpetuate old associations, they desire the ministrations of their priest and an atmosphere where their own faith is the faith of everyone; and most of all perhaps they desire the congenial society of their own race. The Irish peasant is naturally sociable, he has the genius for it that makes him good company even with a stranger; but his chief pleasure probably lies in the long talks with his own folk. One com-

fort at least is seldom denied him ; where peat fuel abounds no cottage need know a fireless hearth ; and in the wildest and most desolate places houses cluster thick together and talk lasts far into the night. Nor is that all. In some counties, as in Kerry and West Donegal, there is dancing ; and since paraffin gave a cheap means of lighting, in certain parishes hardly a night passes without its dance. These people are not driven to the towns, as English labourers are, by the leaden dulness of daily life ; they do not need the cheap music hall to tickle their brains. Politics interest them, and they gossip over their own doings and neighbours like the rest of us ; but those who know them best testify that their main preoccupation is with the wonderful fairy world, that makes a background to daily existence. Mr. Yeats in a charming book has described the 'Celtic Twilight,' and he is only one of many observers, some of whom have written with the more intimate knowledge of the Celtic life that only Gaelic speakers can come by. One of the latest, Mr. Daniel Deeney, is, at a guess, a national schoolmaster ; whoever he is, his little book of 'Peasant Lore from Gaelic Ireland,' is excellently done, and full of queer tales.

The Irish are shy of imparting these tales to a stranger ; it is unlucky to talk about the 'good people' without due respect ; and the fear of ridicule is deep implanted in their minds. But wherever Irish is still spoken, and in many parts where it is not, every man, woman, and child believes in the existence of a fairy folk, sometimes

helpful, sometimes harmful, but always needing to be propitiated in little ways—for instance, by spilling on the ground the first couple of drains when a cow is milked. And the talk when peasants meet is full of stories how this man was beaten, and that one received a warning, and how another saw the ‘gentry’ and ‘never did good after’ but pined away in a kind of dream. And it is not only fairies that hover all about the living, but the dead also—a belief which fifty years ago would have been counted laughable but now seems to many at least as likely to be true as any other faith. If we are willing to take seriously such a notion as one which Mr. Henry James put into a book lately, that the spirits of the dead linger on earth, and urge the living to evil for a vicarious satisfaction of their own lusts, we may surely look with kindness on the kindly superstition that bids Irish peasants sweep the hearth and range chairs round it duly before they go to bed, that the dead of the house may find all ready for their home-coming.

At all events these beliefs, and the numberless others like to them which Mr. Deeney sets down as examples, are part of the Celtic atmosphere, and the Irish peasant desires to live among those who see the world as he sees it himself, with this background of dim half-comprehended shapes. They are part of the spell that holds him by sympathy to his native earth, and it would be well if, in dealing with an imaginative race, we relied a little on imagination. It is not well that people should

live always within the grip of famine, but the true remedy is not to banish the people but to banish the shadow of dearth. And the thing can be done, as one example may demonstrate. For centuries the Western peasant lived on a seaboard where there were fish to be caught, but he had not the means nor the skill to catch them, nor to sell them if caught. At last the Congested Districts Board took the matter in hand, or rather put it into capable hands, and gave not only the needful advance of money, but sent down teachers and overcame the resistance of a people who, as Mr. Horace Plunkett testified—and no one has a better right to testify—are no idlers, but are extraordinarily slow to move on new lines. And now the fishing industry is established from Donegal to Clare, and many a man lives at home and earns a decent living who, but for the Board, would be in America or the poorhouse.

The details of this reform, and other like reforms, will be given in other pages; here, only one general view need be expressed. Workers agree that the task of getting the Irish peasant to make a new departure by himself is all but hopeless; he will do what his father did before him and his neighbours do beside him. The deterrent is not idleness, but that fear of ridicule which has been a power in the land since the days—fifteen centuries ago—when the order of the bards exercised all but a tyranny in the country by the gift of satire. On the other hand the Irish nation seems to lend itself strangely to innovation by groups, and there is no part of the

British Isles where co-operation can show such surprising results. But these results have been attained by men who realise that you can do nothing with the Irish by laughing at them, nor by scolding them, nor can you radically change their nature. What they have done has been to develop the Irish quickness on its own lines, making full allowance for the prejudices and superstitions of the people, and realising that with all these drawbacks—if one must call them drawbacks—the people are the most valuable belonging of the country. And when one sees the Irish peasant as he may be seen in a barren country like North-Western Donegal, or in one of the little islands off Connemara that carry a population wholly disproportioned to their size, it is impossible not to ask oneself whether these folk who live on a mere pittance happy, healthy, and contented lives among beautiful open spaces of sea, sky and mountain, preserving their natural and national courtesy of speech and demeanour even under rags, would be really better off if they lived as men live in Sheffield or the slums of Lambeth, with two pounds a week and two meat meals a day.

THE SECRET OF IRELAND

A COUPLE of summers ago a party of us in the West of Ireland were idling through the vague interval that divides Sunday breakfast from a start for church. The house looked north-west on to a bay so landlocked, that for all one's eye could tell it might have been a lake. Over against us, a matter of three miles off, rose a mountain, which practically filled the peninsula between our bay and the next inlet on that indented coast. It was an August day of blazing sunshine without a breath of wind; the surface of the water shone like glass, and across it came clear, but mellowed by distances, the sound of many voices and of creaking oars. The bay swarmed with currachs, and every currach carried a full complement of passengers; for the lower slope of the mountain was dotted thick with cottages that shone white across the bay under the sunlight, in among their tiny patches of corn and potatoes,—patches where the crimson of wild loosestrife often over-mastered the yellow or the green—and from all these cottages the most devout of populations was streaming over to mass at the

little chapel near our house. On the landward side the nearest place of worship in the little town on the coast road would have been a matter of five Irish miles from most of them, so except in days when a rowing-boat could scarcely live on the water,—and it is wild water that the folk there will not face in these contraptions of tarred calico or canvas stretched on a willow frame—they cross the bay to their devotions. And a pleasant sight they were to see as the boat-loads entered the little creek just under our house; the men indeed not looking their best, for a good proportion of them were black-coated, but the women splendid with their heads blue-shawled and their red or dark blue petticoats. Pleasant and cheerful their voices and laughter sounded; anything less like the procession of village yokels shambling heavily and sheepishly to church that England is familiar with, it would be hard to imagine. How they were all going to fit into the little chapel to which there would be already gathering on foot the people from our side of the water, I could not guess; but all through Ireland folk are used to be packed tight at mass on Sundays.

When their procession of boats was ended, we decided to follow their example, and pulled round to the shore to within half a mile or so of the church—a much more important looking building than the chapel, and a much more comfortable spot on that baking day. Here was good elbow-room, although the congregation was a large one for that part of the land. There were two or three

coast-guards with their families, a policeman from Ulster, our own numerous party, and the rector's belongings—and perhaps a score of other people, from the great house five miles off. Dresses that would have been appropriate enough in Hyde Park on a summer afternoon looked, I thought, a trifle incongruous in Connemara ; and the ladies' maids and footmen were perhaps even more exotic. But the most incongruous figure of all was a stout square-built gentleman in a frock-coat, whose every gesture and angle spoke of the English manufacturing town, just as unmistakably as the whole dress and bearing of two men in the next pew testified to the traditions of the British army. After service, when there was the usual five minutes of assemblage outside the church-porch, the congregation was entirely innocent of brogue, and the gentleman in the frock-coat dropped something as he was speaking. The same kind of an assemblage might be found, I should say, at any station in India ; and it would be just about as much in touch with the worshippers at the adjoining temple.

This was of course in Connemara, where virtually the whole resident gentry of the old stock has disappeared, and their houses, where they are tenanted at all, are let to shooting tenants. To a certain extent, I fancy, the same state of things can be observed in the Highlands—but with differences. In the first place, the West of Ireland can never rival the Highlands as a game preserve ; shootings and fishings there can never fetch a

reasonably good figure until you get rid of the population that crowds the chapels. In the second place, the Highlanders are only separated from the visitors who come to live among them by blood, by immemorial habits, by speech (in part), and by the great gulf of poverty. There is not the barrier of religion, the most difficult of all to surmount; a barrier that is felt, not in Connemara, where there is really no contact of the two lands, but throughout the country where Catholic and Protestant meet on equal terms and rub shoulders daily. It would be hard to exaggerate the separateness, the cleavage, that runs through the whole country. Even in Dublin, where educated men of the two religions but often of the same political creed mix freely in their professions or their business, there is little social intercourse, little real intimacy. Broadly speaking, at Protestant houses you do not meet Catholics. They are kept apart by instinctive antipathies—instincts maintained, no doubt, by the deliberate policy of the Catholic Church. But it is in the country parts, not in the towns, that a person, trying to understand what Ireland really is, what it hopes, fears, loves, or hates, becomes most acutely aware of the aloofness. It would be hardly too much to say that Catholics in Ireland form among themselves—without intention and even without knowledge—a huge secret society, like all secret societies, amenable to a special code.

The historic genesis of this attitude is not hard to find. Throughout Ireland, on the whole, Pro-

testants are the possessors, Catholics the dispossessed. They were dispossessed not less for their religion than for their race; and their religion is to-day in many cases, perhaps in most, the only mark of their separate origin. It has been the lasting bond, indeed the one and only positive link of union among them—for hate is only a negative tie. Persecution and penalisation were directed against the religion, and in their clinging to what was attacked, they fell away hopelessly from the attacking force—which was the law. And the secret law which grew up among them was so indissolubly bound up with their religion, that the religion could not, if it would, shake it off. Catholicism is a strong religion, perhaps the strongest in the world, but to no people in the world does it represent so much as to the Irish. It is the one thing they retained. They lost their land, they lost their language, and with it their traditional culture, but they kept their religion; and when their religion ceased to be attacked they kept the habits and the instinctive organisation that they acquired in defending it. The Irish peasant, who passes for an expansive confiding creature, is in reality the most reserved of human beings.

How much does the average gentleman living in rural Ireland know of the Catholic population? About the Catholic gentry I can say nothing: there were none at all in my own county where the Catholics were in a large majority of the voting population; but I suspect that the land-question

has made a barrier hard to surmount. The gentry buy and sell with Catholics, they rent land from them, they employ them; but the kind of institutions that upon occasion abolish class differences in England are absent in Ireland. Cricket is not played, except in the towns and not much there; the Irish climate does not conduce to cricket. Rugby football appears to be taking hold to some extent; but for the most part this also only is played in towns: the Gaelic game is exclusively cultivated by the peasants and shopkeepers, and I question if anyone could find a Protestant who had played Gaelic football. There remains hunting; and generally speaking there is probably more friendly intercourse over questions connected with horseflesh than over all other subjects put together between men of the two creeds. But, taking it all round, throughout Ireland wherever Catholics are in the majority the upper class are Protestants, separated from the lower class not so much by any great difference in the possession of money (since the successful shopkeeper is apt to be better off than the average landlord) nor in education, as by a radical divergence in social code and religious creed.

Whoever has read one of the most amusing books of late years will recognise that this is the state of things portrayed in the 'Experiences of an Irish R.M.' In the ordinary parish there are three Protestants in the upper class who have specially close intercourse with all their neighbours—the rector (for the Church of Ireland clergy as a rule

do a deal of ministering to the Roman Catholic sick and poor), the dispensary doctor (if he happens to be a Protestant, which is increasingly rare in Catholic districts), and the stipendiary magistrate. The Irish distinguish sharply between the civil and the criminal law. There is no people in the world more willing to invoke justice between litigants; there is none less willing to further the arrest of a criminal. And the clever ladies who wrote this book knew, as was natural that ladies of a famous Irish family should know, that the experience of an Irish Resident Magistrate might reasonably be made to embrace the life of Irish society from top to bottom. But practically it is apparent that his experiences are of two distinct kinds. There are those in which he is an active participant, one of the players in a comedy, moved by the same sort of motives as the rest; such are all his dealings with the amiable Mr. Flurry Knox, with Flurry's grandmother, Mrs. Knox, of Aussolas (a character no more exaggerated, I would venture to say, than the indisputable Flurry himself) and, generally, with the whole clan of Knoxes. These dealings have all of them to do with love or sport or horses, but primarily with sport. The society in which he moves contains the authorised sportsmen of the neighbourhood, and its most intimate relations with the other and larger society outside it and around it are contracted in the pursuit of sport. A gentleman's most familiar associate among the peasantry is apt to be some one like Slipper of these stories, a personage who is poacher

and gillie by turns. Slipper is a reprobate, but very often one's acquaintance of this kind may be a perfectly decent, virtuous, and sober person. The point, however, is this. Where Protestant and Catholic see most of each other in Ireland is over sport; and in these cases, the Protestant shoots, the Catholic carries the bag; the Protestant hooks the salmon (if he can), the Catholic gaffs it. I should be the last to deny that real friendship grows up out of this relation; but the mere fact that people meet exclusively as employer and employed, or patron and client, stamps a special character on the intercourse. It is not the same thing as playing together on a side; rather the relation, in establishing itself, marks the essential separateness.

Thus what you find directly reflected in this book, with an amusing distortion no doubt, but still reflected, are the manners of the Irish upper class. In so far as the book relates the Magistrate's dealings with the Irish who are not of his circle, the Catholic Irish, the method of portrayal is quite different. The light thrown on the life of the peasantry is thrown from outside, showing chiefly their exclusiveness, and how little the Magistrate really knows about them. Take for instance the only tragic story in the book, 'The Waters of Strife.' The Magistrate has been attending a regatta in which he witnessed a race between a scratch crew in their shirt-sleeves and the representatives of the local football club, the Sons of Liberty, in their green jerseys. In the

progress of the race the coxswain of the shirt-sleeved crew had occasion to strike the bow of the other boat over the head with his boathook and was cheered by a lad named Bat Callaghan, who watched the contest from the wheel of the Magistrate's dog-cart. Bat was pulled down by a man in a green jersey, but the fight was prevented by the police. Next morning the Magistrate was informed by his factotum that the police were searching for one Jimmy Foley. There had been blood 'sthrewn' about the road at one point: 'Sure they were fighting like wasps in it half the night.'

'Who were fighting?'

'I couldn't say, indeed, sir. Some o' thim low rakish lads from the town, I suppose,' replied Peter with virtuous respectability. When Peter Cadogan was quietly and intelligently candid, to pursue an inquiry was seldom of much avail.

The police-inspector, however, reported that Foley's cap had been found drenched with blood, and opined that there must have been a dozen people looking on when the murder was done. No evidence was forthcoming, but some days later the police, acting on a hint shouted through the Magistrate's window one dark night, discovered Foley's body in the river with the head battered in. About the same time Bat Callaghan was found to be missing. Nothing else happened; but a few months later Major Yates, the Magistrate, was in the barracks occupied by his old regiment when a rifle went off. A recently joined man was found in convulsions. On recovering he explained

that he had fired his rifle at a face that haunted him; and then fresh convulsions came on and he died. He was of course Callaghan. There is nothing at all hard to believe in this story, except perhaps the effects of remorse. One would like to point out to the English reader that 'the secret half a country keeps' is kept all the same, when the victim is not a bailiff, or the tenant of an evicted farm, but a member of the Sons of Liberty football club, in his green jersey. There is nothing surprising in the story of 'The Holy Island,'—that delightful tale of hospitable Mr. Canty and the smuggled rum. If barrels of rum are washed ashore from a wreck, no doubt they belong legally to the Crown or to the insurance company or some other vague entity; but it is only human nature to act as if the person who picked them up might dispose of the contents and to refrain from informing a meddlesome police as to where a picker up has bestowed them. And in Ireland, where one set of the people is playing a game through life in which the law and the police figure merely as forces that must be defeated or evaded, a kind of incarnate bad luck, naturally there is a kind of popular enthusiasm for the player who smuggles off his rum in fish-boxes under the very nose of the police and magistrates, by attaching a van to the special train that convoys the cortége of a defunct bishop. All that is human nature. But human nature must be strangely bitted and bridled by long custom when a man can be hammered to death with stones in a wayside fight and his kith and

kin, in the most clannish of countries, not lift a hand to give the murderer up to justice. It is exactly the attitude of schoolboys towards the justice dispensed by their masters; just or not, they will not invoke it. The criminal law is a thing alien and hostile to the whole body of the community.

No doubt, in a case like this, the Irish make far greater allowance than the law admits for the excitement of a fight. The heart of the people goes out in sympathy to combatants, as the authors of these 'Experiences' explain in the phrase of a countryman, telling a friend how he watched a tug of war, and 'cried a handful over Danny Mulloy, when he seen the poor brave boy so shtubborn, and indeed he couldn't say why he cried.'

'For good nature ye'd cry,' suggested the friend.

'Well, just that, I suppose,' returned Danny Mulloy's admirer resignedly; 'indeed, if it was only two cocks ye seen fightin' on the road, yer heart 'd take part with one of them.'

But chiefly the reason is an instinctive hostility to the law. Things are in a transition stage. In the old days the matter would have rested till the next faction fight, and then the kinsmen of the Son of Liberty would have taken exemplary vengeance on Mr. Bat Callaghan, or failing him, on some other Callaghan. Now, these blood feuds are mostly at an end. Such homicides are only punished by their own conscience, by the opinion of the community, and by the priest.

There one says the name of the strongest power

in Ireland,—so long as there is no such over-mastering personal ascendancy as Parnell's was—the factor of which least is known, and assuredly the greatest fount of knowledge if it were available. In every Catholic parish the priest is at the very heart of things. Quarrels, reconcilements, love-affairs, money-dealings,—all are familiar to him as his own personal concerns. And that is why any book about Ireland written by a priest should command attention, but more especially a book about the Irish Catholic clergy. I would not say that 'My New Curate' is altogether admirable as a piece of literature; but it is a singularly pleasant book to read, and it throws a new light on the life of Ireland.

Father Dan, who acts as the narrator, commentator, and chorus, is seventy years old. Long ago he has been sent by a kindly bishop to this outlandish seaboard Gaelic-speaking parish; for, as the bishop said, Father Dan 'was a bit of a *littérateur*, and there would be plenty of time for poetising and dreaming at Kilronan.' Nevertheless Father Dan had come to his parish with great resolutions. Not only would he read and write greatly, but he would put a new life into the people; he would build factories, pave the streets, establish a fishing-station, make Kilronan a favourite bathing resort. He tells the result.

I might as well have tried to remove yonder mountain with a pitchfork or stop the roll of the Atlantic with a rope of sand. Nothing on earth can cure the inertia of Ireland. It weighs down like the weeping clouds on this damp heavy earth, and there's no lifting it

nor disburthening the souls of men of this intolerable weight. I was met on every side with a stare of curiosity as if I were propounding something immoral or heretical.

Gradually Father Dan, no fighter, succumbs and drifts like the rest; he sees himself in the evening of his days with nothing to show for his life but an absence of earthly trouble and some few consolations: 'My breviary and the grand psalms of hope,—my daily mass and its hidden and unutterable sweetness—the love of little children and their daily smiles—the prayers of my old women, and, I think, the reverence of the men.' The words are eloquent, and, what is better, they ring true, and they apply beyond the scope that is given them. Not the priests only, but the whole mass of the friendly innocent indolent folk in these distant corners of the country find the reward and the purpose of their lives in the consolations of human kindness and sympathy and in the great anodyne of their religion. These things contribute their part, more perhaps than the very air of Ireland, to produce that inertia, that indifference to material progress, which is a form of mysticism. Side by side with the most living faith in the mysteries of Christianity goes the conviction which was written up in large letters over the mantelpiece of Father Dan's old curate, *'Twill be all the same in a hundred years.*

But the old curate had received a mandate from the bishop which transferred him from Kilronan to another parish twenty miles off. He had gone

out among the tears of the villagers, with his untidy deal furniture roped on a cart, following at the tail of three loads of black turf; and Father Dan, who had spoken lightly of the bishop's powers, was to get a new curate who would 'break his heart in six weeks.' And with the new curate came the first breath of a new order. Father Letheby was Irish born,—the son of a shopkeeper in a town not far from Kilronan—and Irish educated; but he had served for some years in Manchester, and he announced his arrival by sending in a card, to the amazement of Hannah, Father Dan's housekeeper. He was lodged at the presbytery, and the first result of his coming was that after breakfast next morning Father Dan sent out his razors to be set. The next was the insurrection of Mrs. Darcy the chapel woman, who flounced in and threw her bunch of keys on the priest's table.

'Wisha, where in the world did you get him, or where did he come from, at all, at all? The son of a jook! [this reflects the first impression produced by the advent of the curate's furniture, including a piano in a pantechnicon van.] The son of a draper over there at Kilkeel. Didn't Mrs. Moriarty tell me how she sowld socks to his ould father? An' he comes here complaining of dacent people! "Dirt," sez he. "Where?" says I. "There," sez he. "Where?" says I. I came of as dacent people as him.'

But next Sunday the sacristy floor was waxed, the grate black-leaded, the little altar-boys were in snowy surplices, and Father Dan was confronted with a stiff white amice instead of the old limp and wrinkled one he was used to; and, to crown all, Mrs. Darcy answered his summons in a white

apron laced at the edges and pinned to her breast. That was only the beginning. Soon the little boys and girls came out of school chanting their rosary together before they broke up for play. Father Letheby was a musician, and he organised concerts and took the choir in hand; and though Father Dan kicked against the innovations, they commended themselves to him in spite of himself. He might preach *quieta non movere*, as the only wisdom for the West of Ireland; he might counsel his curate to moderate his pace; but still the young man's enthusiasms won on him; they reminded him of his own. Father Letheby was a scholar too, and Father Dan had some one to talk over his classics with. In the parish the curate's powers with the ball when he started the football matches ensured popularity.

So much for the effect produced by the new curate on the priest and the parish. But Kilronan was not less strange to him than he to Kilronan. Almost his first experience was of a night call to a wild corner of the parish, while he was still at the presbytery, and Father Dan said a word of regret next morning. But the curate was enthusiastic.

'I never saw anything like it. I had quite an escort of cavalry, two horsemen who rode side by side with me the whole way to the mountain, and then when we had to dismount and climb up through the boulders of some dry torrent course, I had two linkmen or torch-bearers, keeping on the crest of the ditch on either side and lighting me right up to the door of the cabin. It was a picture that Rembrandt might have painted.'

He paused and blushed a little as if he had been pedantic.

'But tell me, Father, is this the custom in the country?'

‘O yes,’ said I, ‘we look upon it as a matter of course. Your predecessors didn’t make much of it.’

‘It seems to me,’ he said, ‘infinitely picturesque and beautiful. It must have been some tradition of the Church when she was free to practise her ceremonies. But where do they get their torches?’

‘Bog-oak steeped in petroleum,’ I said. ‘It is, now that you recall it, very beautiful and picturesque. Our people will never allow a priest with the Blessed Sacrament with him to go unescorted.’

That impression of the fervour and devotion of these worshippers is reinforced again and again; yet with it go strange slovenliness and irreverences that terribly shock the newcomer. The worst of all happens after a Christmas celebration, at which Father Letheby has for the first time arranged a Bethlehem chapel for the congregation, to their intense joy and edification. The description of the effect upon the fervid Celtic imagination produced by the group of figures is too long to quote, but the writer conveys a fine sense of its force and depth. ‘It was as if God had carried them back over the gulf of nineteen centuries and brought them to the stable door of Bethlehem that ever-memorable night. I think it is this realisation of the Incarnation that constitutes the distinguishing feature of Catholicity.’ But next day was St. Stephen’s, when through all Catholic Ireland the ‘wren boys’ go their rounds. Father Letheby was passing a public-house and from inside he heard issuing the strains of the *Adeste* in the voice of his best but his most drunken chorister. He entered.

Leaning on the deal table, with glasses and pints of porter before them, as they sat and lounged or fell in various stages of intoxication, were the wren boys; and near the fire with his back to the door, and

his fingers beating time to the music in pools of dirty porter, was Jim Deady. As Father Letheby entered, he was singing

*Deum de Deo, Lumen de Lumine,
Gestant puellæ viscera—*

It is easy to believe that Jim Deady's unhappy instructor wanted to abandon his mission next day, and had to be roundly scolded by his superior.

In short it is easy to glean from this book some notion of a priest's high moments of exaltation, and black hours of discomfiture, over his purely religious work in Ireland. And on the social side of it Father Sheehan is not less informing. The new Curate has not been long in the parish before he runs up against men drilling by night and he reports the matter to the priest. Father Dan's attitude towards the secret society is noticeable. 'I know,' he said, 'there are some fellows in the village in receipt of secret service money, and all these poor boys' names are in the Castle archives. But, what is worse, this means anti-clericalism, and consequently abstention from Sacraments and a long train of evil besides.' Application to the police provides the priests with a list of all members of the society and the name of the informer. Father Letheby comes in on a drill and explains to the boys that they are sold, and Father Dan has a quiet interview with the informer. It all passes under the surface; but Father Letheby backs his argument by telling the rebels that their newspapers (the anti-clerical Nationalist journals) are owned by Freemasons and Jews; and Father Dan hints that the anti-Catholic agencies work

in Ireland by the dissemination of pornographic literature. What seems to us the nightmare of Catholics on the Continent is not less keenly dreaded by the Irish priest; and that explains many things in politics. Nationalism that is to have loyal support from the Catholic Church must be Catholic first and Nationalist afterwards. It is probably a serious factor in the political situation that Mr. William O'Brien's wife is of Jewish blood.

But there are other forces at work in Ireland now than the merely political ones; and the new Curate enrolls himself on their side. He is appalled by the Oriental languor of the Kilronan men, who will stand long hours together propped like posts against a wall, their hands in their pockets, scarcely opening their mouths to spit, much less to speak; and he goes into Father Dan's old projects, but with a new energy and a new backing. There is a Board now that will advance money towards building a boat; and Father Letheby induces the Board to do so, that his parishioners may compete with the Frenchmen and the Manxmen for the fish. Moreover he induces the manager of a neighbouring factory to send down sewing-machines and linen for shirts to be made with them; while he, on his own responsibility, takes an old mill for the girls to work in. The result of the two enterprises is a tragic failure. The 'Star of the Sea' founders, uninsured, on her trial trip, run down by a French steamer, with the suggestion of malice. One may doubt if in actual practice to-

day such a thing could happen : the Board would see to insurance, and the foundering is not likely, though, if the enterprise had been worked in Father Letheby's way, and a big boat with nets to match had been given to line-fishermen, the result would have been not much better ; boat and nets would have rotted. They manage these things better now ; the work of the priests is merely to induce their people to avail themselves of the chances offered, and very well they do it, in many cases. Sometimes, too, no doubt, they have to back their recommendations by an offer of security, and they may perhaps have Father Letheby's unfortunate experience. But the matter of the factory is more typical. The manager who sent down the work reported that it was ill done and unsaleable ; and the girls replied with grumbling. Moreover when a press of orders came in, the workers objected that it was a holiday, and went off to keep the feast. The ill-conditioned minority overruled the majority, and hinted that 'the priest was turning a good penny by it.' The result was a demand for payment on the machines and no money forthcoming. That is extremely like the career of most philanthropic experiments of the sort in Ireland. Everywhere the peasantry meet the efforts to provide work for them with the suspicion that the philanthropist is wanting to make money out of them unfairly. But nevertheless it happens again and again that business men come in and erect a thriving concern out of the wreckage left by the philanthropist.

This however wanders from the point, which is that on the whole throughout Ireland at present the priest is apt to be the pioneer of industrial enterprise, or at least a potent aid. It would be truer to say that the priest of the new generation is so; the older men, with noble and notable exceptions, incline to Father Dan's axiom of *quieta non movere*, and his social pessimism. Perhaps the most interesting chapters in the book are those called 'A Clerical Symposium' and 'The May Conference.' The latter sketches the different types of belief at present existing; the discussions of ceremonial, the more exciting discussion of Biblical criticism, beginning with a young priest's paper which, as Father Dan sums it up, 'left us to think that by something called Ritschlian interpretations, the whole Bible was knocked into a cocked hat.' Father Sheehan has no sympathy with the higher criticism, and his new curate defends with fervour the theory of direct inspiration; but one did not realise that the higher criticism had reached Kilronan, or that a country priest in Ireland would speak of the *Magnificat* as a 'literary composition.' Great changes, according to Father Sheehan, have come in with the last three generations of Irish priests that an old man can remember. Father Dan's early memories go back to

'Polished studious timid priests, who, educated in Continental seminaries, introduced into Ireland all the grace and dignity and holiness, and all the dread of secular authority, with the slight tendency to compromise, of the French clergy.'

Upon these followed the brood of Maynooth, fierce fighters for the temporal as well as the spiritual interests of their people,

Men of large physique and iron constitutions, who spent ten hours a day on horseback, despised French claret, loved their people and chastised them like fathers. . . . They had the classics at their fingers' ends, would roll out lines from Virgil or Horace at an after-dinner speech, and had a profound contempt for English literature. In theology they were rigorists, too much disposed to defer absolution and to give long penances. They had a cordial dislike for new devotions, believing that Christmas and Easter communion was quite enough for ordinary sanctity.

And, behind these, comes the third wave.

Below the waterline of grey heads is the coming generation of Irish priests, clean-cut, small of stature, keen-faced, bicycle-riding, coffee-drinking, encyclopædic young fellows—

regarded with a tolerant pity by the older men, who 'have as much contempt for coffee as for ceremonies.' And yet, as Father Dan admits, the future is with the young men, and in his judgment they can make good use of it; they lack neither energy nor devotion, whether to their faith or their country.

On such matters a layman and a Protestant has little right to speak; yet it is safe to say that if Father Letheby, with his enthusiasm, and his good will to use religion in the service of outward decency and material progress, stands for a fair type of the new generation among priests, then the influence of the Church is not likely to weaken in Ireland. But it will remain an influence that no lover of freedom can altogether approve; and already, as the concession of Local Government

operates, there comes into being a national life where the priest must almost of necessity come into collision with his people. Hitherto, the political question has for the most part been simple; priest and people alike desired and voted for a particular legislative measure which they were powerless to obtain. They were agreed that the Irish people should have power over its affairs in Ireland, but when it comes to using the power there may be divergences; the issue grows complicated. And the priestly conception of Irish society is one in which authority everywhere prevails, children being subject to their parents, and parents being subject to their priest. Father Dan and his curate are at one in thinking that the Christian ideal of marriage was best realised in Ireland, at least up to recent times.

There was no lurid and volcanic company-keeping before marriage, and no bitter ashes of disappointment after; but the good mother quietly said to her child, 'Mary, go to confession to-morrow, and get out your Sunday dress. You are to be married on Thursday evening.' And Mary said, 'Very well, mother,' not even asserting a faintest right to know the name of her future spouse. But then, by virtue of the great sacramental union, she stepped from the position of a child and a dependant into the regal position of queen and mistress on her own hearth. . . . Married life in Ireland has been, up to now, the most splendid refutation of all that the world and its gospel, the novel, preach about marriage, and the most splendid and complete justification of the supernaturalism of the Church's dogmas and practices.

One rubs one's eyes on reading a passage like that. But facts are facts, and by any generally accepted test it must be allowed that the institution of marriage works better in

Catholic Ireland than anywhere in Christendom ; though the Irish peasant, in taking a wife, holds very frequently that there is not 'the odds of a cow between any one woman and another.' The cause assigned by Father Dan for the success of these marriages is not that to which a Protestant would assign the fact, but his is apparently the view taken by orthodox Catholics, a view of life so unlike ours that we are left gasping in conjecture before it. Yet if one thinks a little, the very incomprehensibility of such an attitude is in itself a clue ; we begin to realise vaguely why Catholic Ireland is so hard to understand, and we can guess that the priests inherit a knowledge of its secret. They read instinctively the heart of a country that has never grown up, of a people that is still in tutelage. What will be their place and part in an Ireland that has achieved a really national life, that has ceased to believe in a millennium brought about by legislative enactment, must yet be seen. We cannot take without reserve Father Sheehan's presentment of them ; everyone in Ireland knows that there is another side to the picture. Nevertheless the type which he shows us comes infinitely nearer the truth of the things than Lever's sketches for example ; and, let the priests be good or bad, for the present they, if any class, are the keepers of the secret of Ireland.

SOME RACIAL CONTRASTS IN FICTION

THERE is nothing in the world so magnificent as the Anglo-Saxon race. There never has been anything so magnificent. It has shown an unparalleled power of multiplying and extending itself, its dominion is the greatest recorded in history, and it has the entire future in reversion. Its justice is proverbial; it combines spotless integrity with perfect adaptation to the requirements of trade; it uses an unprecedented quantity of soap and water. Its religion is moderate belief, not extravagant superstition; its civilisation is the only civilisation worth speaking of; it represents the triumph of practice over theory, of activity over leisure, of manufacture over art, of efficiency over culture. It has made more machines and more money than ever were made before. And if the whole world becomes Anglo-Saxon, so much the better for the world.

All the propositions here stated have become for many of us axiomatic by the effect of steady iteration. It is, however, no matter for surprise that certain voices of dissent should be heard among the less privileged nationalities, and, though it is

unnecessary to discuss the more explicit utterances of this dissentience, one may find a certain profit in observing how the Anglo-Saxon ideal, as presented in fictitious cases, strikes those to whom it is congenitally alien. And here it is necessary to say that the fullest embodiment of that ideal is to be found in the United States. America has more population, more money, more enterprise, less tradition, more efficiency, less culture than the older branch of the race. Such, at least, would be the unhesitating verdict of all Americans, and a very considerable section of English people would endorse their views. One may properly begin, therefore, by considering two novels by M. Pierre de Coulevain, who contrasts with great ability the manner of life and thought habitual to Americans with the life and thought of the admittedly decadent Latin races. It is to be understood, of course, that this decadence, however universally recognised by Anglo-Saxons, is less perfectly clear, for example, to Frenchmen, and M. de Coulevain cannot be taken as quite convinced of it. The contrast, as he sets it forth, does not appear to him wholly to the advantage of America.

He finds the juxtaposition which is necessary for his ends in studies of international marriages. Each of his two stories is extremely slight in plot, or perhaps one should say consists rather in the development of psychological processes than of external happenings. 'Noblesse Américaine,' the earlier and better of the two novels, introduces us to a family of Americans—Mrs. Villars, Miss Annie

Villars, and Miss Clara May, cousin of Miss Villars—who come to Paris where a relation is married to the Marquis de Kéradieu. Miss Villars has just attained her majority, and is the heiress of some two millions—a sum which, stated in francs, sounds overwhelming, and is considerable in any currency. Moreover, she is well born, well bred, pretty, intelligent; she represents in position and personal endowment the very best that America can produce. She is free, but it has always been tolerably well understood that she is going to marry a Mr. Frank Barnett, who does his best to dissuade her from going, and pictures Europe as full of coronets, each of which presents itself to him as a kind of gilded game-trap ready to close on a great heiress. Miss Villars, however, is very sure of herself; she will go, and she will come back as she went. And since, like all American women, she has ‘*le culte de la volonté*,’ the will which she worships and confides in makes argument futile.

On the other hand, in Paris there is the Marquis d’Anguilhon, representative of one of the greatest French houses, and physically as well as morally a fit representative of it. His own expenses, following on those of his progenitors, have left him reduced to a pittance of some two hundred a-year. A wealthy marriage is easily open to him, but he has decided on a very different line of conduct, and is in treaty for a post on an expedition to the left bank of the Niger. His man of affairs, whom he consults about finding the money needful for a

complete settlement with creditors before departure, suggests an alternative to African exploration. This alternative is, of course, Miss Villars. The intermediary proposed is the Duchesse de Blanzac, whom Jacques d'Anguilhon had adored in his boyhood. After some debate, d'Anguilhon consents to see the Duchesse on the matter. This lady, for the present purpose, may be held to represent the ideal Frenchwoman. Married young to a grand seigneur, whom she loved in spite of the difference in their age, she has been left a widow young, and has become one of the admitted leaders in the most privileged circles of the Faubourg St. Germain. As a friend of the Marquis de Kéradiou, she has secured for the Villars household an entry to the most jealously guarded doors; but her influence has only been given unreservedly as a tribute to the personal qualities of Annie Villars herself. She has taken a fancy to the frank young American, and in liking her has studied her, and in studying her has liked her. Yet her first movement when Jacques d'Anguilhon makes his demand is one of repugnance—'Oh, pas cela!' And when he presses for her reason, she answers that between him and Miss Villars there lacks the affinity needed for happiness in marriage, 'Vous en delà, elle en deçà.' And, in explanation of her meaning, she draws a distinction which is, at least for M. de Coulevain, fundamental between the races. Dreams overstep the limit of life, heroism the limit of courage, fanaticism the limit of religion, unnatural desire the limit of wickedness.

Now, the American woman, broadly speaking, never oversteps the limit of things.

‘ They fall short of our natural range, which borders on the ideal ; we already overshoot it. If they could hear me they would protest vehemently that they were more cultivated than we. So they may be —so they are. And yet an ignorant slip of a girl, brought up behind the walls of a convent, will have flights and aspirations beyond the power of their lady-graduates : her soul will attain to heights, plunge to depths, that all their science will never help them to. There is Mme. de Kéradiou, for example, living for years now in France, who knows more, and is more intelligent, than half my acquaintances ; and yet there is a mass of subjects on which I could not talk to her. Directly one touches the abstract, she cannot follow. And that has a remarkable effect in limiting the field of intercourse.’

That is, in a rough way, M. de Coulevain’s hypothesis, the underlying principle which he seeks to establish. Let a Frenchman of the best type marry an American of the best type, and he will be liable to ask for more than she can give him. She will not be able to follow him into fields of thought and emotion where he moves as a denizen. Nevertheless, Mme. de Blanzac, having laid down her views, consents to act against them. She does not like to disoblige a friend ; more seriously, she is influenced by the alternative of Africa. Jacques is the last of the d’Anguilhons, and he is the only son of his mother. And so when the marriage is made, as ultimately it is made, the Duchess has made it. But by that time not only has Annie fallen in love with Jacques, but Jacques has fallen in love with Annie.

What, then, are the reasons which prevail over the determination not to succumb, originally

adopted by Miss Villars—good Protestant as well as good American? First, no doubt, the attraction of a great name and position, and of Jacques himself, with his golden brown eyes and strange resemblance to the handsome d'Anguilhon ancestor, whose portrait by Vandyck had fascinated Annie before she met the descendant. But, further, there are other reasons, which depend upon a relation between the sexes strange to her American ideas. An introductory chapter, which is neither more nor less than an essay on the American woman, is cast mainly in the form of a dialogue between Annie and Mr. Frank Barnett, her undeclared suitor. In America, says M. de Coulevain, the work of man is more remarkable than man himself. And a notable production of the American man (though M. de Coulevain does not put it quite like this) is the American woman. She is the creation of a chivalrous race, which has devoted its entire energies to money-making; she is the spending partner. The typical American woman is not Annie Villars, in whom long intimacy with her nurse, a Catholic Irish peasant, has sown a seed of mysticism, but Clara May, her cousin, a young person with dazzling complexion, robust physical equipment, and no sexual predispositions (*pas de tempérament*); a clear head, no sentiment, plenty of fixed ideas, and among them the especial convictions that America is the finest country in the world, that one is put on earth to enjoy oneself, and that man was created to provide

woman with food, dress, and attendance. She is avid of experience, wants to see and know everything; but the experience which she desires must be external or visual. She has not the desire of her European sisters to experience passion; it is a bondage unworthy of a free woman in a free country. As for the formulæ in the marriage service, with their mention of obedience and the rest, she either treats them as quaint survivals or else insists that they shall be omitted from the ceremony. Such is the type which M. de Coulevain takes to be most representative of American womanhood—perhaps wrongly, perhaps basing his observation only on the American in Paris. However, there is at least an element of truth in the picture, and Annie Villars, at all events, is presumed to have been brought up in a society where woman is not only man's equal, but a good deal more. All of this is fully realised by M. d'Anguilhon, and still more by his confederate and monitress, the Duchesse de Blanzac. And consequently M. d'Anguilhon behaves in a manner as unlike as possible to that of the men with whom Miss Villars has been acquainted. He does not run after her, does not fetch and carry for her; rather, he expresses himself plainly to the effect that if anyone must fetch and carry it should not be the man. To his mind a gentleman who will hold a lady's plate at a ball supper makes himself ridiculous, and no Frenchwoman would like to see her adorer so diminish his prestige. As the acquaintance

progresses he interferes actively. Annie and her mother, like most American women (and a good many English), being of perfect respectability themselves, have a great desire to see what is not respectable; they take a box at the Variétés and raise the *grillage*, with the result, as Jacques d'Anguillon puts it, when he comes to rescue them from an unpleasant situation, that they expose themselves to be taken for what they are not.

Briefly, what succeeds with the girl is not merely his personal charm, but his tone of authority, which in a compatriot Annie would have resented. And he, on his part, is caught and charmed, for a while, by her very unlikeness to the women of his own country. They go off radiant on their honeymoon, and the wedding tour is a great success. Nevertheless, from the first Jacques experiences certain incompatibilities. Their minds are never in perfect contact: in Mr. Barnett's phrase, however well they get on together, they never understand one another. Annie wants to 'do' the galleries in Rome thoroughly, exhaustively, and having done them to pass on; and soon they do their sight-seeing separately. 'He sees nothing,' Annie writes home, because her husband will only look at perhaps half a dozen statues or pictures in the day, and often prefers to go back to what he has seen already. In her heart she probably feels that it is only an American who can take in things and judge them with proper celerity. Here is

a concrete instance of the lack of understanding:—

One evening they were coming out of St. Peter's. Twilight had filled the church, and the great bell of the basilica sounded the Angelus. The sound of this bell, which on earth has no fellow, stopped him abruptly on the colonnade. He glanced round him. The square was empty, but the vibrating notes of the bronze filled it with prayer.

Strongly moved, he murmured 'Beautiful!'

'Splendid! Immense!' said Annie. 'I forget how many feet long the colonnade is. I must look it up.'

And accordingly, in the fading twilight, she produced her 'Baedeker.'

The result of all this was that Jacques felt impelled to continue by correspondence the intimacy which had grown up between him and Mme. de Blanzac. He was, however, still enchanted with Annie. When little differences arose he kept a firm hand, as, for example, when she accepted an invitation from them both without consulting him, merely conforming, she explained, to the habit of her countrywomen, against which no American husband ever thought of protesting. Yet, contrary to all the traditions of her race, she submitted to discipline, as, on M. de Coulevain's view, she would never have submitted to correction from a husband in her own country. The young couple were joined in Rome by Mme. d'Anguilhon, the mother of Jacques, a Frenchwoman of the old and severe school—Royalist and devout. Between her and her daughter-in-law there arose not quarrels, but discussions over religion and morals, which illustrated again the racial incompatibility. Once Annie picked up the

Marquise's 'Livre d'Heures,' and was astonished by the pictures—St. Francis of Assisi with pierced hands, St. Theresa with her heavenly rapture. 'How funny! how funny!' Jesus, with his breast laid open to disclose the bleeding heart, horrified her. The Marquise, embarrassed, explained that it was a symbol. 'Rather a coarse symbolism,' said Annie. Matters were no way mended when she began to read and comment.

'How curious! I thought I knew French quite well, but I don't understand half of what is here. I can't think how Antoinette de Kéradiou was brave enough to join such a complicated religion.'

'Still they say that Catholicism is making rapid progress in your country.'

'Ah, that is because we like to try everything. Why, some people have a craze for Buddhism. Besides, you may be sure that Americans will pick and choose in Catholicism.'

She went on turning over the 'Heures.'

'All these stories would spoil this world for me—and the next,' she said.

Then she began to read aloud one of the meditations before Communion.

'J'ai enfin le bonheur de vous posséder, Dieu d'Amour! Que ne suis-je tout cœur pour vous aimer? Embrassez-moi, mon Dieu! brûlez, consommez mon cœur de votre amour! . . .'

Annie stopped short.

'Why, that is madness. How dare anyone speak to God like that! Phrases like these cannot be sincere. Who in the world wants to have their hearts burnt and consumed with love?'

Even more typical perhaps is another passage where Annie, taken to visit Assisi, regrets, to the stupefaction of the Marquise, that St. Francis and St. Claire never married. When the old Catholic lady endeavours to explain for this little positive spirit how much energy has been generated by

these uncompleted lives—how St. Francis and St. Claire have ‘radiated through the whole world, built thousands of monasteries, and spread through the whole Middle Ages a waft of charity and poetic life’—Annie is only confused. She can see vaguely that these people have actually done more for Assisi than if they had struck oil there or founded a pig-killing factory; that after five centuries their fame and their name still draw pilgrims by the thousand to the place. But she cannot comprehend. ‘It is queer, certainly,’ she answers.

‘Ah! there will never be any saints in America,’ she added quaintly.

‘Who knows?’ said the Marquise.

‘No, no! I don’t see an American divesting himself of his goods, preaching poverty, and talking to doves. Instead of St. Francis we shall maybe have men who will lessen poverty and make the world a more comfortable place.’

Is not that a fair expression of the contemporary Anglo-Saxon ideal? Economic progress—first in the sense of wealth accumulated, secondly, and as an ultimate ideal, in the sense of wealth distributed—is the sole conceivable end of action.

There is no need to elaborate the contrast. But in the end Europe triumphs. Jacques becomes the lover of Mme. de Blanzac, and after two years the fact is brutally thrown in Annie’s face by the Duchesse herself, seized with a fury of jealousy for the wife’s privileges. And Annie departs from all the principles that she had over and over laid down—she feels herself bound by her child, by her

position, by a hundred ties, to remain; and she remains—like any mere Frenchwoman. In the end, for she is a kind little person, she forgives her dying rival; but she can understand neither the passion which led the Duchesse to transgress nor the consolation which her religion offers to her. Her own immunity, according to M. de Coulevain, consists in her limitations—she is capable neither of the splendid virtues nor the answering vices.

In his other book, '*Ève Victorieuse*,' the author develops more fully the thesis of an American woman's insensibility, and questions the completeness of immunity which her training secures. It must be allowed that the two American women presented in the first chapter are not shown in an advantageous moment. Helen Ronald has a husband in every way satisfactory—rich, handsome, distinguished, and devoted. But her nerves demand a journey to Europe, and his scientific pursuits forbid him to come too, which appears to her almost a dereliction of duty. Her cousin, Dora Carroll, also charming and beautiful, is even less reasonable; she insists at the eleventh hour on accompanying Helen, though this involves putting off her marriage with a man who is eager to marry her. So the pair arrive in Paris determined to have a good time. Almost from the first Helen Ronald, who is of striking appearance and affects striking toilettes, finds herself followed in the street by a young man. According to M. de Coulevain, a Frenchwoman in such a case would be annoyed and reproach

herself; the American, on the other hand, is rather gratified than otherwise, and Mrs. Ronald is no exception. Confident in her bringing up, which has led her to view all positive transgressions as a mark of vulgarity, and therefore as a thing impossible to the superior type of woman, she does what a Frenchwoman would consider frankly wrong. Just as she goes to questionable, or more than questionable, theatres, so she flirts regardlessly, convinced that she is (in her own metaphor) fire-proof. The elderly and experienced Frenchman to whom she uses this phrase warns her to beware of the resurrection of Eve; but she despises the advice, and when she meets the unknown youth who has followed her—he proves to be an Italian (the Count Sant' Anna)—she flirts with him to the last limit of discretion. None the less, she is horrified beyond measure when he appears in her room at night. And just as she is disgusted at his interpretation of her conduct, so he is disgusted at her lack of response to his passion—it seems to him unnatural. So they part in anger. Nevertheless, Eve triumphs, for Mrs. Ronald is visited with regrets. (It is fair to say that M. de Coulevain supposes her to bear in her veins the taint of Latin blood.) The sight of the passion which she has evoked tempts her, and when later on she encounters Sant' Anna again, he has his full revenge by winning the affections of Dora Carroll, whom he marries. The impact of this American young girl on Roman society (in the 'black' aristocracy) is amusingly described, but we are

concerned here only to draw a moral from the case of Mrs. Ronald, who suffers all the torments of jealousy before she finds peace in the Catholic Church, aided by a miracle of faith-healing. Practically, the point of contrast is this: The American woman thinks herself authorised to play with fire because she knows and believes (rightly in many cases) that it will not burn her. The European (or let us say the Frenchwoman) admits that to play with fire is wrong, but if she provokes passion, admits that it has a claim upon her, and would be slow indeed to pique herself upon insensibility. Or it may be put in this way: Catholicism recognises the existence of sex passion, and holds it to be a sin to which all are prone, and against which all should be mindful to take precautions. Protestantism, at least as construed by the extreme type of the Anglo-Saxon (and it is in the essence of Protestantism to lend itself to individual interpretation), refuses to recognise that passion has any hold on a well-balanced nature, and therefore sanctions a course of behaviour which presumes passion to be non-existent. The ideal Frenchwoman is very unlike the ideal American lady. The American ideal looks for strength inside, and counts upon finding it; the Latin ideal recognises a human frailty, and believes that help will be given on condition of obedience. Unquestionably the American ideal is the more self-respecting, and it is not the meek, but the efficient, who are going to inherit the earth.

M. de Coulevain, it must be understood, in spite

of his sentimental weakness for the artistic and emotional qualities of a Latin people, shares to the full the cult of efficiency. Although he stops short of the orthodox belief that the more efficient race will wholly monopolise the direction of affairs—although he reserves a place for France in the scheme of things—he is of those who regard the American, at least the American man, as probably the strongest force in the future—the inheritor of the world, for the world's advantage. Catholicism, for example, is to be taken in hand by America, revised, expurgated, and, in a word, brought up to date. Very different from this is naturally the attitude of an Irish Catholic novelist. Father Sheehan's book, 'Luke Delmege,' is undisguisedly a study of an Irish nature brought for a moment under the influence of English ideals—of a Catholic temporarily affected by standards which Catholicism, or at least Irish Catholicism, passionately condemns. Luke Delmege is a young priest, who, at the opening of the book, returns to his peasant home in the South of Ireland, laden with all the honours that Maynooth has to bestow, full of generous ardour, and full also of ignorant conceit. We are here examining the novel from a special standpoint, but it may be said that Father Sheehan's work ranks with Carleton's, and that is no small praise. It has something of Carleton's inequality, many of his lapses and technical incompetence, but it has a peculiar tenderness and beauty, and a richness of wit which may well stand comparison with Carleton's excellence.

And whoever wishes to understand Ireland ought to read it, and will find it full of charm and of interest, from other aspects than that in which I propose to consider it. Indeed, even a mind thoroughly penetrated with the fundamental doctrines of imperialism, efficiency, and the rest, may find it an agreeable relaxation after the strenuous and tonic literature so lavishly provided to-day.

Luke then comes home, and the first man to greet him after the family's welcome is Father Pat, curate of the parish of Lisnalee—no scholar, no saint, a sportsman, a contemner of tea and coffee, but acquainted with every trouble and success for three parishes round, and adored as 'the best poor priest within the four says of Ireland.' That word 'poor,' as Father Sheehan observes, is in Ireland the distinctive term of canonisation.

'Poor Father Tim!' 'Poor St. Joseph!' 'The poor Pope.' Is it not significant that an impoverished race, to whom poverty, often accentuated with famine, has been the portion of their inheritance and their cup for nigh on seven hundred years, should take that word as the expression of their affection? Happy is the priest to whom it is applied; he has a deep root in the people's hearts.

To the parish priest of Lisnalee that term was never applied. Canon Murray, a man of good family and connexions, on which he greatly prided himself, commanded reverence rather than affection, and commanded it with good right, for he had been a bulwark against eviction, had promoted cottage industries of dairying, poultry-farming, and bee-keeping, till he could boast that such a

thing as absolute want was unknown under his rule. But when Luke, with his ambitions and aspirations full blown, came, as in duty bound, to pay his respects, the Canon had nothing to speak of 'but a very respectable career in the Church,' leading 'to the honours and—ah! emoluments of the ministry.' This to a young man afire not for the common self-sacrifices of priesthood, but for his chance of martyrdom in China, or of ministration to lepers! Thus from the first two ideals are set before Luke—the one leading through years and well-established respectability to 'honours and emoluments,' the other through self-sacrifice and humiliation to objects perhaps wholly superannuated in a world that had spun so long 'down the ringing grooves of change.' 'Are we going back to coaches when we have steam? Back to monasteries when we have hotels? Back to mortification, dishonour, forgetfulness, the *innominati* of the cell and the tomb?' Are we, in a word, going to turn our backs upon America, where, as Annie Villars observes, there will never be any saints, only to fall in with the unprogressive ways of the *insula Sanctorum*? These ways, as Father Sheehan's business is to show, are dear to the inhabitants of Ireland, for quite other reasons than mere native indolence or native propensity to dirt. Luke's father, Mike Delmege, was 'a stern old Irish Catholic of the Puritan type, silent, God-fearing, and just, who never allowed a day to pass without an hour of silent communion with God in his bedroom after the mid-day meal, and on whose

lands the slightest whisper of indelicacy was punished by expulsion.' *Non sic itur ad astra.* That is not the way to a balance at the bank. The man was industrious and prosperous as a peasant, but peasant he would stay, unless he took the one line of success—*optima summi nunc via processus*—through a grocery store with spirit licence attached, or else emigrated to America. And, moreover, whether in Ireland or America, to achieve success in this world and the accumulation of wealth, it is essential to attend to business, and to keep the mind resolutely fixed on practical problems, and the heart where the treasure is. For the moment Luke was still in Ireland, still inclined to the ideals of the *insula Sanctorum*, and grew enthusiastic over the story of Father Tracey, who thought himself too elevated as a parish priest, and so, seeking salvation on a lower rung of the ladder, became chaplain to a city hospital, where he might be seen wandering the streets in an old coat green as a leek. Luke expressed a desire to kiss that man's feet, and his friend Father Martin told him it would be easy, for the toes were generally through his boots. This, however, was before Luke went 'on the English mission.'

The young priest saw England from the Channel, and could not understand the peace and calm of what he saw.

'I thought,' said Luke aloud, 'that every notch in her cliffs was an embrasure, and that the mouths of her cannon were like nests in her rocks.'

'Tis the lion "couchant et dormant,"' said a voice.

The voice which answered so eloquently to eloquence was that of a ship's officer, who continued to dilate upon the terror of 'the silent and sheathed strength of England.'

'I dare say it is something to be proud of,' said Luke, who was appreciative of this enthusiasm, but did not share it.

'Perhaps not,' the officer replied. 'It is destiny.'

'You see the Cornish coast,' he continued, pointing to a dim haze far behind them, in which the outlines of the land were faintly pencilled. 'Would you believe that up to the dawn of our century, fifty years ago, that entire peninsula was Catholic? They had retained that Catholic faith from the times of the Reformation. Then there were no priests to be had. Wesley went down, and to-day they are the most bigoted Dissenters in England; and Cornwall will be the last county that will come back to the Church.'

'Horrible,' said Luke sadly.

'And yet so thin is the veneering of Protestantism that their children are still called by the name of Catholic saints, Angela, and Ursula, and Teresa; and they have as many holy wells as you have in Ireland.'

'It must be a heartbreak to the priests,' said Luke, 'who have to minister amid such surroundings.'

'I only speak of it as a matter of fate,' said the officer dreamily. 'It is the terrific power of assimilation which Protestant England possesses.'

'You must be proud of your great country,' said Luke.

'No sir,' said the officer, 'I am not.'

Luke looked at him with surprise.

'Ireland is my country,' said the officer in reply. 'And these are our countrymen.' He pointed down into the lower deck, where lying prostrate in various degrees of intoxication were four or five cattle dealers. They had sought out the warmth of the boiler during the night; and there they lay, unwashed and unkempt, in rather uninviting conditions. Their magnificent cattle, fed on Irish pastures were going to feed the mouths of Ireland's masters, and tramped and lowed and moaned in hideous discord for food, and clashed their horns together as the vessel rolled on the waves.

It will be seen that Father Sheehan does not

blink facts. Luke's entry to London up the great sea avenue, which is also the great sewer of the nations, is described with the same mixture of hostility and admiration; and the visions of his first London days, when he sees the huge city that swelters round him hanging like a goitrous wen on the neck of Britannia, are reasonably enough set down to unaccustomed nerves and disordered digestion. Still, the working of this vast machinery where men go about solitary in multitudes depressed and distressed him.

He only felt dimly that he was carried on, on, on in the whirl and tumult of some mighty mechanism; that the whirl of revolving wheels, the vibration of belts, the thunder of engines, the hiss of steam, were everywhere. And that from all this tremendous energy were woven fair English tapestries—stately palaces and ancestral forests, trim villas, and gardens like Eastern carpets—and that the huge machinery tossed aside also its refuse and slime—the hundreds and thousands that festered and perished in the squalor of the midnight cities. For over all England, even in midsummer, hangs a blue haze, and over its cities the *aer bruno*, in which the eye of the poet saw floating the spirits of the lost.

He stepped from the silences of God, and the roar of London was in his ears.

Gradually, however, Luke began to identify himself with the machinery. He had success as a preacher and lecturer, and his parishioners made him welcome. The home-circles seemed to him dull, yet their kindness penetrated his nature, and it began to seem to him that there was between the two races 'only a sheet of tissue-paper, but politicians and journalists have daubed it over with the visions of demoniacs.' Under the new influences he was drawn more to the platform, less

to the pulpit; talked freely of the Zeitgeist; laid it down that 'the whole trend of human thought is to reconcile revelation with intellect, and out of the harmony to evolve a new and hopeful instauration of human blessedness'—in which renascence Catholicism must take its rightful place, and 'speak boldly, with large free interpretations of natural and supernatural revelations'—in short, must modify itself in accordance with the Anglo-Saxon and individualist ideals. In the meanwhile his bishop transferred him from London slums to a cathedral town, where he saw the beauty of England, and became part of an agreeable and highly-cultured society of religious eclectics—Anglicans and Romans—who encouraged him to extend his sphere of thought and of reading. From these surroundings he was recalled home to his sister's wedding.

He went south from Dublin through a land of rich pastures, ruined abbeys and castles, and deserted cabins. The side-car that met him at the station looked old and shabby, the horse unclipped. He had returned home changed. The first thing that vexed him was to hear of a new curate who despised the Canon's methods of improving the country and put his whole faith in the League. Luke was now entirely of the Canon's way of thinking; and at his sister's wedding, when the house was filled, and a deal of whisky was being drunk among the fiddling and the piping and the dancing, he was shocked by the spectacle of many beggars who had congregated to the feast. At

the house of his friend Father Martin he said so, and a discussion arose over the principles of political economy. Before it was done, Luke had enunciated the generally accepted principle that the true end of human action is the elevation and perfection of the race, with the corollary that 'it is England's destiny to bring all humanity, even the most degraded, into the happy circle of civilisation.' Father Martin's reply was the astounding proposition that whereas the Spaniards and the Portuguese might claim to have 'conserved, raised up, and illuminated fallen races,' England's mission was only to destroy and corrupt. One does not expect much, but surely Father Martin (or Father Sheehan) might be aware of what has been done where every Babu is a monument of British civilisation : surely he might have heard of the civilising work which another branch of the Anglo-Saxon race has been called upon to accomplish in the Philippines. Luke, feeling all this, gives up his compatriot in despair. But it must be said that if Luke champions England in Ireland, he is not slow to put the other aspect of the case in England. His ministrations were by no means limited to the rich ; he had a flock of Irish and Italians who ignored 'the great pagan virtues of thrift and cleanliness.' Father Sheehan neatly sums up the racial antithesis in a couple of pregnant speeches:—

'A family of Hirish peddler, sa, and a family of Hitalian horgan-grinders. They are very untidy, sa, in their 'abits.'

'Thim English, your reverence, they're haythens. They don't go to church, mass, or meeting. They think of nothing but what they ate and drink.'

Luke's sympathies were not those of the Charity Organization Society; and when, as gaol visitor, he came into contact with the remorseless operation of English law, with its heavy punishment of offences against property, he cried out against it, only to be told by one of his cultivated mentors that his countrymen were curiously sympathetic with crime—a lawless race. He retorted, not without some show of truth, that 'Carlyle, not Christ, is the prophet of the English people.' Substantially, however, he came back to Ireland from his foreign mission a convert to the Anglo-Saxon ideal, and bent upon spreading the light. It cannot be said that the result was an entire success. The very poor parish to which he was sent as curate seemed to him Siberia; his superior, the devout, unprogressive, and extremely uncultivated old peasant priest, was unendurable, and the people offended him with their slovenly ways and their servile courtesy. Finally, in his zeal for reform he roused a hornet's nest. A gross neglect of punctuality, and a breach of the rules of the diocese which forbade the offering of drink at a funeral, gave him the chance to make an example; he let the corpse go to the grave unattended. And in a month's time he was removed in promotion to a model parish—saddened, but still faithful to ideals of progress.

Here for the first time he secured a certain popularity by encouraging a revolt from the habit of servility. The Rossmore branch of the League, on Luke's motion, bound itself not to take off hats

to any man in future except the priests. The result was an amusing piece of comedy, and a triumph for the diplomacy of 'the ould gineral's' daughter, ending in friendly relations between Luke and the 'ould gineral' himself, the unpopular local magnate at whom the League's resolution had been aimed. And this only paved the way to worse trouble, for the ladies of the big house, at Luke's suggestion, began to civilise the poor, and endeavour to replace the shocking daubs, representing patriots and saints, by pleasantly-coloured and well-drawn illustrations from the London picture-papers. And Luke found himself accused of countenancing the 'souping' proselytiser.

However, this is in a manner accidental; the real incompatibility lies deeper. He preaches to his congregation 'of justice, temperance, punctuality, foresight—the great natural virtues which must be the foundation of the supernatural superstructure.' And the people are only puzzled.

'Begor, he must be very fond of the money. He's always talkin' about it. Post-offices, and savings banks, an' intherest. Why doesn't he spake to us of the Sacred Heart, or our Holy Mother, or say somethin' to rise us and help us over the week?'

What completes the puzzle is his liberality. Why he should always be ready to give, and yet furious if an old woman comes to sit in his kitchen and lifts a handful of potatoes while dinner is getting ready, passes their comprehension. And poor Luke is driven to the conclusion that 'a man cannot do his duty in Ireland and remain popular.' The only priest who has succeeded in creating progress

is Canon Murray; he has really raised the standard of living. But that phrase is a red rag to the Canon's new curate, Father Cussen. 'The standard of living! That appears to be the one idea of your modern progress—the worship of the body, called otherwise the religion of humanity.' Modern progress! But what is modern progress? Mammon worship, says Father Cussen. He has the courage of his convictions, and contrasts the Neapolitan lazzarone with the British miner, not to the advantage of the latter. Here is plainly an end of argument; but we may give the statement of the opposing views. Luke makes the natural answer that the Briton is a producer, a being to respect; and even if it can be argued that the idle Neapolitan, with his pleasures, his enthusiasms, and his religion may perhaps be the happier, yet the Briton is evidently the higher type, because he is serving humanity.

'Now look here, Delmege,' said Father Curran, 'I don't want to hurt you, but that's all cant and rot, the cant and rubbish of those who are for ever dictating to the world what the Church of God alone can perform. You know as well as I that all this modern enthusiasm about humanity is simply a beggar's garb for the hideous idols of a godless world. You know there is no charity but in the Church of God. All the humanitarianism outside is simply political self-preservation, with the interest of the atom lost in the interests of the State. And if you want a proof, go to your prisons, go to your workhouses, or go down to your ports of lading, and see paupers and helpless maniacs dumped on your Irish shores, because, after giving their best years to build up the Temple of Mammon in England and America, their wretched support, half a crown a week, would lessen the majesty of the mighty god! There is the huge fiction of Protestantism—the godless abstraction—the State, humanity, the race, &c. Never a word about the majesty of the individual soul!'

‘That’s all fine rhetoric, Curran,’ said Luke, ‘and fine rhetoric is the bane of our race. But whilst all your theories are depopulating the villages and towns of Munster, Belfast is leaping with giant strides towards prosperity and affluence.’

‘One moment,’ said Father Curran. ‘Our southern towns and villages are being depopulated. Why? Because the great god Mammon is sending his apostles and missionaries amongst us; because every letter from America is an appeal to the cupidity and lust for pleasure, which is displacing the Spartan simplicity and strength of our race. The gas-lit attractions of New York and Chicago are rivalling successfully the tender, chaste beauties of Irish life and Irish landscapes. It is because all the chaste simplicities of home life are despised for the meretricious splendours of city life that our people are fleeing from their motherland. But you spoke of Belfast?’

‘Yes,’ said Luke. ‘While all down here is a slough of despond and misery, there in the North you have a metropolis of splendour, and wealth, and progress.’

‘Progress, again. In heaven’s name, man, are you a Christian and a Catholic?’

Exactly. From the point of view of ‘a Christian and a Catholic,’ London, Birmingham, New York, Chicago even, is not worth Lisnalee—or Bethlehem. It is a preposterous saying, and it is difficult for an Anglo-Saxon to see how Father Sheehan’s young priest returned to the darkness of superstition. Nevertheless, he returned, and learnt to believe that the poor in goods, in heart, and in knowledge, were the superiors of himself.

He wanted to lift them up, and lo! there they were on the summits of the eternal hills far above him. He desired to show them all the sweetness and light of life; and behold! they were already walking in the gardens of eternity! He was preaching the thrift of money to the misers of grace. Where was the use of talking about economising to a people whose daily fancies swept them abroad to regions where time was never counted? And the value of money to a race who, if parsimonious and frugal, became so through a contempt of physical comfort, and who regarded the death of a rich man as the culmination of all earthly misfortune?

Some of the causes which completed his retrograde conversion may be noted. The first and chief was the disclosure of a young girl's strange act of self-devotion for a superstitious motive. As a sacrifice on behalf of her brother's soul, she, well born and pure, entered a rescue home and put on the garb of a penitent among the women gathered in out of the streets. Along with this went the example of life offered by Father Tracey, the old priest before spoken of, who had resigned a parish and was now chaplain to this Good Shepherd convent. The other causes are different in kind. One was a return to England, where in Aylesbury he visited his former parishioners. In some of the English homes respectable shopkeepers remembered his name vaguely, and he turned to Primrose Lane, the Latin and Celtic quarter, to see if here too he was dead and forgotten.

He became aware of loud whispering behind him from the open doors.

' 'Tis him.' ' 'Tisn't.' 'I tell you 'tis him. Wouldn't I know his grand walk anywhere?' 'Yerra not at all. Sure, he's away in the ould counthry!' 'But I say it is, 'uman! I'd know him if he was biled!'

And with that they fall upon him, in their demonstrative, affectionate, unprogressive way—unprogressive, because a proper attention to the important business of life passes a wet sponge over the memory of the affections—and Luke found in this sentimental trait a value which obscured his sense of its economic cost. The third cause which completed his severance from the Anglo-Saxon camp and fully reconciled him

with his own people was at once economic and political. Here we must say that Father Sheehan puts a case somewhat extravagantly fictitious: for the notion of an Irish landlord raising his rents to-day has come to be unthinkable. However, here is the story. Canon Murray had stood effectually between his people and their absentee overlord, and there had never been evictions in his parish. One must suppose also that he had kept them out of the Land Court. The industries which he had organised among them had made them prosper, and he was mightily proud of the fact, which he stated one day to a stranger in the local post office, that the exports of butter, eggs, poultry, and honey from the place represented a profit of some £3000 a-year. The stranger turned out to be the absentee landlord, who promptly ordered his rents to be put up by that figure; the result was resistance and wholesale evictions, in the course of which Luke saw his father's house burnt down, and a riot happened which put him in the dock and in gaol for resisting the military. After that, of course, he might do and say what he liked in Ireland—he could do or say nothing wrong in the eyes of the Irish. Father Sheehan's case, as we have said, seems to us not only fictitious, but impossible under the existing order. But Father Sheehan is entitled to say that he represents only what would certainly happen were it not that Ireland's importunity has prevailed over the principles of efficiency and free competition to establish in Ireland a special order which

defies all the doctrines of political economy and prevents land from letting as it did before the last twenty years at its true, that is, its competitive value. The Irish peasant, recalcitrant to progress, has procured exemption from the action of those laws which regulate the housing problem in London or Chicago. An arbitrary legislation has interfered with the great natural process which was forcing him either into the manufacturing districts of England or Scotland, or, better still, overseas to the United States, where he would gradually adopt a higher standard of living, gain the chance of amassing money, and probably disembarass himself of his superstitious beliefs.

One would be sorry to argue with Father Sheehan, and indeed it is unnecessary. Every Anglo-Saxon knows that the Anglo-Saxon ideal is unquestionably the right one, as is admitted by the more candid even among the Latin races—for example, by M. Demolins—and Father Sheehan himself allows that the Irishman living in England is automatically converted to it. If it should be urged by him or by another that the ideal of material progress, as an indispensable preliminary to the higher spiritual civilisation, or we may say, Anglicisation of the world, is an ideal which cannot well be reconciled with all the doctrines of Christianity; we would reply that this only holds of the literal, or, as Swift said, ‘real’ Christianity—to establish which ‘would indeed be’ (again in Swift’s words) ‘a wild project; it

would be to dig up foundations—to destroy at one blow all the wit and half the learning of the kingdom—to break the entire frame and constitution of things, to ruin trade, extinguish arts and sciences with the professors of them; in short, to turn our courts, exchanges, and shops into deserts, and would be full as absurd as the proposal of Horace when he advises the Romans all in a body to leave their city, and seek a new seat in some remote part of the world by way of cure for the corruption of their manners.’ And of this impossible ideal, this preposterous and unprogressive religion, it is as true to-day as in Swift’s time that it has been ‘for some time wholly laid aside by general consent’ (of the Anglo-Saxon world) ‘as utterly inconsistent with our present schemes of wealth and power.’

THREE DAYS IN THE 'GRANUAILE'

WHEN I came down on to the shore of Ballinakill Bay, through a lane fringed with great fuchsia-bushes in a mass of crimson bloom, there was no sign of the 'Granuaile.' The only large vessels in sight were two heavy hulks, one of them fitted with a windmill pump. These, the Member of the Board explained to me, were ice-hulks which in the spring fishery were stationed at different points on the coast whence the mackerel were despatched, but after their use was over the 'Granuaile' towed them in to lie by quietly for another year.

The Board, I should explain, is the Congested Districts Board of Ireland, and the 'Granuaile' is the Board's steamer. Wandering about in Donegal, I had heard and seen a great deal of the Board's work; I had crossed bridges which they had built; I had bought homespun which their examiner had inspected; I had seen potatoes which probably owed their exemption from blight to the spraying-machines which the Board had introduced; and I had visited a clean thriving town with a cooperage in full work turning out

barrels for the herring-fishery, and had learned that neither boats, nets, cooperage, nor clean little town would be there but for the Board, which had really given to remedial legislation in Ireland the character of a remedy, and not of a charitable palliative to the old diseases of unthrift and famine. But how these things were brought about I had no clear notion, and it was chiefly to obtain one that I had gone to the west. And after three days of actual seeing, and perhaps ten of talking, I came away with a certain insight. The methods of the Board are so admirably informal and unofficial that one would gladly imitate this quality: a sort of log of my experiences in the 'Granuaile' may perhaps give a better idea of what is being done in the 'congested districts' than a tabulated analysis with serried rows of statistics.

The Congested Districts Board was appointed in 1892 to see what could be done for those parts of Ireland where more people live on the land than the land, taking good year with bad year, can fairly support. Nearly the whole west coast, from Donegal to Cork, comes under this description. Human beings are by no means so thick on the soil as they once were; the hillsides that run into Ballinakill Bay are all striped and furrowed with the trace of old potato-rows where now there is no house to be seen; but for all that there is a large population, and one always in danger of famine. Now, for the actual dwellers on the coast, it was obvious that a resource lay at their

doors undeveloped. The Atlantic off that seaboard has always been rich in fish, and the Spanish Armada must have carried many a man who knew the coast well. In Kerry, some time back, when the Board were building a pier, they came upon traces of an old one, and inquired. 'Sure, that's the old Spanish pier,' was the answer. And in Inishbofin, an island off the mouth of Ballinakill Bay, there stands the ruin of a fort built under Charles I. which mounted four-and-twenty guns.

For in those days, to supply a Catholic Europe with fish, the fishing fleets of many nations used to repair to the west coast of Ireland. When there was war between France and Spain, England was obliged to protect the vessels of her ally, and this fort was built to afford a refuge to friendly fishermen. It was garrisoned throughout the Commonwealth, but under Charles II. the Government in its wisdom decided that the garrison cost money and should be withdrawn; but lest complications should arise, it would be well to destroy the harbour, and the State papers still actually preserve a record of six hundred pounds paid to a gentleman for performing this valuable service. Happily, though he took the money, he did not perform the contract, and the harbour is still available for fishers of our own time.

As America became better known, fishers from the fish-consuming countries went more and more to the Newfoundland Banks for their cod and ling, and the west coast of Ireland, remote from

all steam communication, grew deserted. Its own people were never a sea-going folk; the O'Malleys and O'Flahertys had their trade of piracy, but it was carried on by oared galleys, and in seamanship they were probably little in advance of the comrades of Ulysses. Net-fishing they never seem to have understood, and had little temptation to venture it; for the lines and lobster-pots brought all they needed for themselves, and how were they to dispose of a haul of fish which must perish long before it reached even Galway? Yet the fish were there; and charitable individuals had more than once bestowed boats and nets upon the Irish fishermen, and been cruelly disappointed when the gear went to ruin and the boats never put to sea. The truth is, that seamanship is not learnt in a day, and a crew who will face the ugliest-looking water in a miserable curragh are scared out of their lives when a fine sailing breeze carries them in a bigger vessel ever so little out of sight of land; while a modern train of nets is about as much use to the ignorant as a Maxim gun would be to savages who had never handled anything but bow and arrow.

Accordingly, when the Board made up its mind to develop the fishing industry, there was a great doubt as to how to proceed. Many advisers advocated the establishment of schools in which boys should be taught how to fish on dry land. Happily there was a competent guide available, and Mr. Balfour—to whose initiative all these things must ultimately be referred—had the

wisdom to give him a free hand. He consulted the Rev. W. S. Green, a clergyman whose whole life had been spent by the sea, and who had been always devoted to sea-fishing and to the study of marine zoology. Mr. Balfour had, in the first instance, taken him away from his parochial work and removed him, as it has proved, to a far wider field of usefulness by appointing him an Inspector of Fisheries; and when the Board was formed he was naturally included among its nine members. To Mr. Balfour's question how to establish a fishing trade on the Aran Islands (which had been selected as a suitable place for the first experiment) Mr. Green practically replied by demanding *carte blanche*. He wanted, in the first place, a telegraph wire laid to the islands to connect them with the markets: in the second, a steamer to maintain intercourse regularly between Aran and Galway. All this was granted, and Mr. Green himself supervised the experiment, acting as captain of the 'Fingal' (150 tons) during the first year. His object was to induce the Araners to fish for the mackerel which in April and May were to be found some ten miles outside the fringe of islands which lies along the whole coast. The Board was willing to provide boats and nets and two skilled fishermen, who should sail as instructors in each boat, and to give the crews a fair share in the profits. But the Araners would have nothing to do with it. It was an unfamiliar risk that they were asked to take, and they did not believe in the profits. They knew that in

autumn the mackerel came inside the islands—though there was no organised fishery of them—but in spring no one had ever seen them. Mr. Green was simply relying upon his scientific knowledge of the habits of fish, and upon the observations he had made when fishing in deep water on behalf of the Royal Dublin Society. Consequently it appeared that the first thing necessary was to prove that the fish were there, and could be profitably disposed of. Seven crews of Arklow fishermen—with whom deep-sea fishing is a tradition—were subsidised to come with their boats and fish off the Aran Islands, and in April 1893 they began work.

As the 'Fingal' started out of Galway with these pioneers, the fishermen of the Claddagh came down to jeer, and all the world was eloquent upon the folly of disregarding local knowledge. If the Board had consulted Galway men they would have heard that mackerel might perhaps be caught in August, but that it was ridiculous to fish in April. In Aran it was the same story, and the Arklow men, sensitive to ridicule like all Irishmen, were extremely sullen over the business. However, they went out night after night. Five days later word came to Mr. Green that they had caught no fish, and were so ashamed of themselves that they were on the point of giving up the whole job and bolting. He steamed out hurriedly in the 'Fingal,' and arriving in the morning, heard that the boats had gone out the evening before, but that no sign of them had been seen since. It was

an anxious moment, for a heavy stake had been played. The Board had brought over boats, nets, and its cargo of boxes—for, of course, no local buyer was available, and it had to be its own merchant—and had fetched a cargo of ice from Norway. There was every reason to believe that the Arklow men had decided in disgust to up stick and run for it. The 'Fingal' went out to look for them, and at the long last one boat was sighted. She had mackerel! Soon all came in, and among them they had six thousand. The fish were put into ice, a wire was sent to order a special train, the 'Fingal' steamed into Galway triumphant with the boxes, and was met by a population no longer derisive. The fish reached land in a lucky moment when prices were high, and the luck held. A fortnight of calms set in; no boats could get out to shoot nets, but the 'Fingal,' actively subsidising the new industry, towed the boats nightly on to their grounds, and in the morning brought them home, and, if the local steamer had more than she could carry, ran to the rail-head to despatch the take and secure the fancy prices. The upshot was that the seven crews earned on an average £350 apiece in the two months' fishing.

Naturally this was enough to convince the most sceptical, and before the fishing was over Araners were applying for boats, and did well enough to ensure their continuance. At the present moment the Board has no concern with the mackerel trade on the Aran Islands except in developing the

local fleet. All the buying there is done by the representatives of private firms, who are allowed to use the Board's curing stations on an understanding that they do not go below a certain minimum price; if they do, the Board steps in as a competitor and drives them out. This operates as a safeguard against the formation of a 'ring'; and the natural competition, with this menace in the background, keeps things on a very satisfactory basis.

Such was the beginning of what is now a thriving industry. Besides issuing loans on ordinary personal security, the Board supplied boats and nets on the following terms. Each boat carries a crew of six; two of them are instructors, men brought over from Scotland, the Isle of Man, Arklow, Kinsale, or some other centre, who are employed at £2 a-week to teach the natives how to manage their boats, to shoot their nets, and, what is a more difficult lesson to enforce, to look after their gear. The take is divided into nine shares: five go to the men, four to the Board as an instalment; so that ultimately the crews acquire their boats and nets when they have paid the price. As they become competent and are reported fit to be trusted with the boats and gear, which are still the Board's property, the instructors are withdrawn. In Aran there are now few instructors, but the islands are supplying instructors to other places along the coast.

Having said thus much by way of preface, I may proceed with my log. I reached Ballinakill

on Monday, August 5, 1899. This brought me into the slack season of the mackerel fishery—for the fishery on the Connaught coast is mainly of mackerel, whereas Donegal has within the last few years been profiting by the return of the herrings to seas which they had long abandoned. The spring fishery lasts from the beginning of April to the middle of June, and it can only be carried on by largish boats unless in very exceptional weather. At that time of the year the fish can be packed in ice—at least the bulk of them—and despatched by train to the English markets. The Midland Railway's extension to Clifden is not only a boon to tourists, but brings the rail fifty miles nearer to many of the fishing centres. But in the autumn fishing, which begins to be in full swing on September 1, and lasts often right into the winter, the fish are taken nearer inshore, and are always cured. So that the business of the 'Granuaile' in August was to go round the coast, taking away nets and distributing salt.

That also requires a little explanation. A train of nets is worth about £70; and unless the nets are properly 'barked' at intervals, and turned over every week, damp will get into them and the whole thing perishes. And after many losses from the carelessness of men with whom the care of gear is not an inherited tradition, the Board finds it better to collect the nets and put them into stores in places where they can be properly tended. This has to be done twice, for the spring

nets are different from the autumn ones—wider in the mesh and shallower in the draught, as being used for a fish of a larger size and for fishing in the open; whereas in summer and autumn it is often necessary to 'shoot' almost in among the rocks. As for the salt, that explains itself; but who has ever seen a salt mackerel?

That was what I asked, and I got my answer from the Board's manager on the 'Granuaile.' He was a Manxman, a curious union of easy good-humour with shrewd business capacity, who had been all his life engaged in this trade, buying fish everywhere in Ireland and Scotland for different merchants till the Board engaged his services; and now it is he who in Connaught arranges the distribution of boats and nets, and—which is not less important—studies the market. Salt mackerel are things that cannot be disposed of anywhere in Europe. Barrels had been sent everywhere—even to Australia and New Zealand—but found a sale nowhere except in two countries—the United States and South Africa. The South African demand is a small one, the consumers being chiefly Kaffirs, who will only pay low prices; so that the fish which go to the Cape are very largely the 'broken' mackerel, that is, the undersized fish or those which get damaged in being extricated from the net. But the great market is Boston, and I saw a return from there showing the sales for the previous year. The Irish supply had just doubled, whereas the sales of American mackerel had been steadily diminishing. And while I was at Ballinakill an incident turned

up which demonstrated how the trade was developing. Advices came to my friend that an American schooner was on her way to fish for mackerel in Irish waters. This was extremely disagreeable intelligence, as the unlucky business of the 'Leda's' seizure of the French fishing-smack was in the papers, and no one wished to run the risk of its repetition. Two days later word arrived that the schooner was coming, not so much to fish as to buy mackerel, cure them on board, and import direct to Boston, thus saving the duty of two dollars on every barrel. Naturally this would hurt nothing but the American customs, and so long as the schooner did her own fishing outside the three-mile limit she would be welcome. But this strays somewhat from my main point, which is to show the value of the work done by the Board's agent in discovering and developing markets for goods that were unsaleable at home.

On a Tuesday the 'Granuaile' came in—a fine steamer, Clyde-built, of about 350 tons; fitted like a yacht amidships for the Board's annual tour of inspection, but with carrying accommodation not only for cargo but for cattle on her main-deck. The 'Fingal' was superseded, as the growth of the fisheries necessitated the carrying of much larger cargoes, especially of barrels, which take up space. Now the 'Granuaile's' work has changed, for in most places the Board is no longer a merchant; it has made over its stations to private traders, who employ their own steamers to carry their plant and their fish. Nevertheless, as it will appear, she is

in no way idle ; and moreover she was a very pleasant boat to be in, as we steamed out of the bay on the 8th, a lovely day of sun and calm sea, to deposit the last bags of salt at Cleggan, just round the south headland of the bay.

Cleggan is a place which five years ago was at the very back of God-speed, and a barren, desolate, poverty-stricken spot as you could see. Now it bids fair to be a thriving centre ; for Clifden, where the rail-head is, has no good harbourage, but Cleggan Bay is clear of rocks, and it has a pier and harbour constructed at considerable outlay in 1882. Like most relief works it was built in an objectless way. The harbour basin, about seventy yards square, walled in on all sides, lay for fourteen years almost absolutely unused, for the excellent reason that there were no boats in Cleggan. Now, when the fishing is going on, the fleet can hardly get into it : and incredible though it seems, the harbour is not safe. So great is the force of the sea that rushes into the bay ; that its backwash comes up along the shore, and surges through the narrow walled entrance with such force that even dock-gates have not strength to keep it out. More than once the boats riding in the dock, apparently in the most absolute shelter, have been rattled together like peas in a bag in spite of all the crews could do to hold them. But the Atlantic waves on that coast are ill to play with : you may see them break in thirteen fathoms, and a notion of their size may be gained from the fact that though the Skelligs lighthouse is 270 feet above the sea-level, the crest

of a roller leapt up to it and burst out a wall built round the light. However, though the harbour may not be perfect it serves its turn. 1899 was the fourth year of the fishing at Cleggan; and the season's spring fishery had resulted in the payment down of £3361 on the quay for fish taken. This was divided among the crews of forty-eight row-boats—yawls—say 240 men—and of eighteen nobbies and hookers—say a hundred hands. That means on an average £10 a-head; but the crews of the larger boats would naturally earn far more than those of the yawls. In addition to this, about 150 local people were employed on and off in the business of curing the fish, and to them about £800 was paid, the wages varying from 1s. 6d. to 2s. a-day. Altogether, something over £4000 in cash down was earned by the population of two very poor parishes in less than three months; this says nothing of the money paid for carting fish the six miles to Clifden, nor of the increased earnings of the railway. And Cleggan is only one of fourteen or fifteen new stations along the coast.

When we came into the bay we landed on the pier. It was low tide, and the men were at work cleaning out the dock—they also earning wages. Some arrangements were to be made as to getting up a shed close to the pier in which the curing work could go on—another little piece of reproductive outlay. Then a handsome young fellow, olive-complexioned like most of these Connemara men, came up with pleasant greeting, and pointed to a new boat anchored outside the quay. He was one

who had learnt enough in the fishing to get a crew together on his own account, and having found proper securities, got his boat from the Board on the instalment system. He was a palpable evidence of the Board's work. So was his boat, for she was Connemara-built—well-built, too, the experts said, though not of a well-established type. The local boats are three: the curragh, which in Connemara is simply a sheet of strong calico plastered with tar on to a loose boarding; the pookaun, a small boat with a sort of lateen sail, pretty to look at, but dangerous; and the hooker, which in all sizes is common on the coast. Most of the net-fishing was done at first in hookers, but the nobby, a Manx type, has been largely introduced—a boat with much greater capacity for carrying nets and fish, and provided with two short masts which can be let down without being unstepped. When the boat has 'shot,' the mast instantly comes down and she rides easily to the nets. This Connemara-built nobby was criticised as not wholly orthodox: she was not the Connemara type, which is very pretty with outward curving lines of the hull, but rather Dutch-built and very high in the stern. But at all events she was strong and weatherly, and her lord and master was very proud of her. Still, his critics were in some doubt about his competence. The boat was riding to a chain cable, and this cable, instead of being run through the hawse-pipe, was out over the bows—'fit to pull her to pieces if a wind got up,' the captain of the 'Granuaile' said contemptuously. And so austere messages

were left for the handsome young fisherman. Meantime I was hearing why the boat was built in Connemara. The demand is so great that the Board cannot get boats built fast enough, and besides having orders out all over Scotland and Ireland and the Isle of Man, has provided skilled instructors for the local carpenters.

One more thing I noted at Cleggan. I stood on the quay admiring the family of one house,—a patriarchal old man, with magnificent beard, and a straw hat set on the back of his head, like a halo, a very pretty young woman coming out with a pail, and a little boy and little girl sitting far aft on their donkeys, who had come in with their small loads of peat; and I reflected how sad it was that artists did not do justice to all this beauty: though, to do justice to artists, the people object strongly to sitting—whether from superstition, believing it to be unlucky, or from the kind of pride that a girl showed who refused to sit 'because she wouldn't let any man make money out of her,' or simply from the fear of ridicule, like an old woman who refused to earn what she badly wanted in this way because 'they'd have a name out on me.' While I meditated on this I became aware of angry voices, and behold, there were the agents of an English firm very much aggrieved because rival agents had taken up the whole quay at Inishbofin with their barrels. Two years before there had been no spring fishing for mackerel known on Inishbofin, and for the autumn take there was only a local market. Now, here

were English buyers ready to come to fisticuffs for a stand on the island, and before I left the coast I heard of a third competitor.

From Cleggan we ran north to Clare Island, over smooth sea with the superb Connemara mountains on our right, and the islands and the ocean on our left. And here we struck upon a totally different aspect of the Board's work. Our business was to pick up some old nets and bags of salt, for from the fishing point of view Clare Island is not yet a success. Once indeed it was the home of a seafaring folk, the O'Malleys, who almost alone among Irish septs used the sea, and their fortress still stands. But the island has no passable harbour, and on a rough day the steamer could neither have dropped goods nor taken them off at the pier. Consequently, it has a purely agricultural population. We landed and went up to the little ruined church where lies, under a chancel roof that keeps some traces of quaint old fresco decoration, and close by the carved shield of the O'Malleys, no other than the formidable chieftainess, Elizabeth's foe, Grace O'Malley—Granuaile herself.

But we are talking of to-day. In 1896 the Board bought Clare Island from its landlord. These islanders, cut off from the world, have some disadvantages of position; but they are admirably posted to resist the payment of rent and other dues. In Inishbofin now and then attempts have been made to levy county cess and poor-rate. A couple of hookers, with forty or fifty police, sail out from

Galway or Westport in order to seize cattle. But the islanders drive the cattle into their houses and a siege begins. Cattle endure the blockade excellently, but sheep must get out, and so a watch is set night and day on the houses from which bleating proceeds. The last endeavour of this kind continued for about a fortnight—to the great profit of the gentleman who hired out the hookers—and ended in the capture of two or three lambs, a lame horse, and a flock of geese. When the Board purchased Clare Island for £6000, rents were two years in arrears; and the whole island was held in rundale, without a fence upon it. No one knew clearly where his land began and ended—he only knew that he had certain rights in such and such a part; and the cattle were in upon the arable land whenever there was no one by to drive them off. Now the island presents a very different appearance. It is a mountain, cliffy on the seaward side, but towards the mainland rich enough in sunny and sheltered nooks. The whole upper part of the mountain has been made a commonage, and enclosed with a circular stone wall about six miles long: from this wall to the sea all is partitioned into strips running downhill between stone walls, and each tenant has his own strip of land, with the right to graze so many beasts on the commonage. All this work has been done under the direction of the Board's inspector by the islanders themselves, working for wages. But the wages come directly out of payments made by themselves. They have paid up their arrears and rent in full, and the

money thus received has sufficed to accomplish the fencing, a certain amount of drainage, and also some house-building. In some cases the old cottages have been left; in more, new ones have been erected, easily enough distinguishable by their decent framed windows and their sheds for cattle. Previous to this time there was scarcely an islander who did not own a pony as well as a cow; and just two houses on the island owned a shed. Horse and cow, hens and pigs, shared the shelter of one roof with the inmates.

Practically, then, there has been introduced a new standard of decency, comfort, and sanitation; and the cottagers, let it be observed, have built their own cottages. One mason and one carpenter were brought over to instruct and superintend, but the work was carried out by the future occupants. Thus the same policy which has turned the whole coast into a school of instruction in fishery, turns this estate into a school of instruction in agriculture and the decencies of life. Moreover, everywhere one saw good-looking cattle, many of them polled; and I learned that the Board had imported a stallion and a bull; it had brought in new kinds of poultry, and here as in Donegal it was rapidly improving the breeds of all animals used for food or labour in a country whose main wealth lies in its animal products. But the critical moment had yet to come in Clare Island. The islanders paid rent cheerfully while they knew that the rent would come back to them in wages; for the idleness of Irish peasantry is a thing greatly

exaggerated. What will they do now? The Board's object, to begin with that, is to induce them to become purchasers of their holdings under the terms granted by the Land Commission, and to acquire their lands by annual payments not exceeding their former rent. Much will depend on the action of their advisers; something, perhaps, on the influence of the United Irish League, which is labouring to prevent the wholesale conversion of Irish land into grazing farms, and to establish a peasant proprietary. At all events, what is hoped in Clare Island has been actually accomplished on large estates—for instance on the Ffrench property. Within less than two years the Board had apportioned that estate, fenced the holdings, carried out drainage works, and sold it to the tenants, who became purchasers—and the result was a profit of £70 on the entire transaction and complete contentment to every one concerned.

But a further difficulty looms ahead in these cases. Nothing, it seems, will check the propensity of the Irish peasant to subdivide land. He has subdivided as a tenant; what will he do as a proprietor? In the meantime the Board has to deal with cases where this tendency has brought about a hopeless agglomeration of individuals on one estate. In such cases there is nothing for it but migration. From the islands in the parish of Carna, which were overcrowded, people were moved successfully to holdings on the mainland; but the old holdings and the new were in the same

parish. On the other hand, just adjoining Ballinakill was an estate which had been acquired, and on it were several small holdings waiting for occupants, with houses newly built. This illustrates a difficulty which might not at first be thought of. Every man, woman, and child in a parish means money to the priest; besides the yearly dues, there is money at birth, money at marriage, money at death. If you take from one parish five in a hundred of the parishioners, you take five per cent. off the priest's income; and it is not every parish priest (of any denomination) that is indifferent to this world's goods.

One other agency has to be mentioned. As was explained to me by the Board's inspector—an Irishman, who seemed to know the land question theoretically and practically better than any one I had ever met—land is of no use to a pauper. You may give a man a farm and house in good order, but he cannot work it without capital. Hitherto he has only had the gombeen man to borrow from; banks will not lend on the mere security of character. Here steps in an institution already well known on the Continent, which Mr. Horace Plunkett has introduced into Ireland—the land bank. In each parish or district a certain number of farmers or others associate themselves and put together a small fund, which they lend at reasonable interest to men whose circumstances and character are perfectly known to them. A cottager, for instance, wants to buy a couple of young pigs; he has food for them, but he has not got the fifteen

or twenty shillings for the purchase. The farmers, who are the bank, know him to be an honest man, and they know that the pig, barring accidents, will certainly bring double the price when sold. So they lend him the money, getting their six per cent. on what is really excellent security. In the West of Ireland the Board subsidises these institutions. It makes over, say, £100 to a committee who are jointly responsible for it; and the committee lend at their own risk. They can extend operations if they like by putting money of their own into the business, and in some cases they do; it is said that one of these investors is registered as X. Y., 'mendicant.' But in Clare Island the land bank had not reached that point as yet, presumably because it has no professional beggars or other capitalists. However, the place looked thriving enough. All the crops that it grows are consumed on the island; and the sale of sheep, cattle, eggs, and poultry pays for what the people need to buy from the mainland. The need, however, of it and of all these islands is a steamer that should call regularly. While I was there the reply came from a man to whom the Board had offered a loan of £3500 and a subsidy of £500, £300, and £200 for the first, second, and third years, if he would undertake the risk. He refused, and the islands still require this link to civilisation.

The only island generally accessible is Achill, for the Midland Railway have with Government assistance extended a branch to Achill Sound, and established a big hotel there; while long cars and

coaches carry tourists in scores across the island to Dugort and Blacksod Bay. It was for Achill we were bound after Clare, and passing under the cliffs where eagles breed, we landed in Keel Bay at a little harbour, built as usual in the wrong place. A pier was originally constructed there in the seventies after the ordinary futile fashion of relief works. Expert opinion declared that it was useless, but a Treasury official came round on a tour of inspection, and seeing the ruins of a pier, wanted to know why it was not used. Hearing the report, he insisted that more money should be spent, and accordingly another £1500 was laid out by the Board upon a harbour with an entrance not much wider than a footpath, across which there sweeps an appalling run of sea. One would like to set the Treasury official to take a boat in there with a gale of wind blowing. However, we had hardly landed before a local fisherman came down with his petition for boats and nets. The Member of the Board answered him that there were more applicants than there were boats procurable, and that he was ill-disposed to risk them in a place where there was so little accommodation. Up to the present Achill has not become a fishing centre. It is one of the places where a large population lives on almost barren land, supporting itself by annual migration to field-work across the water. All the men go to England, returning year after year, each man or each gang of men, to the same district, where they are perfectly well known; and all the girls to Scotland. It is a great sight when

that migration begins. The girls go off together with cheap tickets by a particular train, and they come down to Achill Sound on strings of ponies, every pony carrying two red-skirted girls and their little bundles of clothes. Some of the men can earn as much as 25s. a-week, I was told, and they live very sparingly—so sparingly, that they come back with £10, £15, or even £20 apiece; and there may be two or three earners in one household. Meanwhile the old men and the married women get in as best they may whatever little yield there is of the crops that their sons and husbands have put in before departing. It is one of the things that English people should realise when estimating the circumstances of these people, that they do not live on the produce of their holdings. The real trade and means of livelihood is field labour in England and Scotland; the Irish holding, for which they pay perhaps only £3 or £4 a-year, is merely the place on which they have their homes and rear their families, in a country where firing costs nothing—since every tenant has the right to cut turf—and where living is as cheap as it can be anywhere for human beings. They pay their rent for a place to live in, which is the place they prefer: if they had their holdings absolutely rent free, their condition would only be a little better than it is. But the fishery begins to open to them a prospect of earning more money without the need of quitting their homes, and the men are gradually beginning to take to it.

We bicycled across Achill over a detestable

road (in great contrast to those in Connemara, which I found everywhere excellent), and picked up the Board's engineer on his way to Dugort to inspect a pier and slip which was being constructed, so that fish could be conveniently landed on the south side of Blacksod Bay, and taken thence overland to the rail-head at Achill Sound. It was night before the steamer met us. We slept on board, and next morning were off across that superb harbour, where all the fleets of the world could ride in perfect safety, to Blacksod Point. The long low strip of land which encloses the bay on the north and west is one of the most backward places in Ireland. At Blacksod Point we were about seventy miles by road from a railway, and Belmullet, the nearest town, is one of the centres where famine is cultivated as a fine art. If there is a place in Ireland where they understand the art of 'dressing the houses' (*i.e.* concealing everything in the way of food or possessions when a Government inspector comes round), it should be there. The people, like the Achill folks, live on holdings which will not support them, but do not emigrate, and when a bad year comes they rely on State charity. However, they also are taking to the fishing, and I heard the names of crews applying for boats among whom were plenty of men who had never handled oar or sail. But the schoolmaster is abroad. On the quay was a pleasant-looking young fellow in charge of sundry barrels, several of them filled with a take of herrings that had come in the

previous day. He was an Araner, who had learnt the business of curing in the last three or four years, and was now sent here to superintend for the Board, which at this undeveloped station still buys and disposes of the fish itself. And there were two boats at sea expected in; we could see the nobbies lying a couple of miles out in the bay, becalmed as they ran in, for the breeze had dropped with the morning. On the quay-head was a very picturesque group—ten or a dozen girls who had come down to get work at the curing if the boats brought fish. All of them, as is invariable in the west, were bare-footed and short-skirted; all wore shawls on their heads, which gave one little chance to see their faces. That is always a pity, for in Connemara, at all events, the average of good looks is unusually high. But their free walk, and the grouping of colours—for they all wore the home-spun and home-dyed flannel skirt, with its rich tones of indigo or madder—made one wish for an artist to paint them as they gossiped together there under the crane among the barrels, with the sea behind them.

We spent some time picking out a spot to build a shed; for the curing becomes bitter work in the open under wind and rain, and unless a store were built it would not be easy to induce a buyer to take over the charge of the trade business—and presently an air of wind sprang up. The nobbies ran in before it, dropping their brown sails as they passed the pier like a bird folding its wings,

and came to anchor just outside—a pretty sight to see. We rowed out to them and found them in no luck—perhaps a score of mackerel in each boat. But there were the schoolmasters—two Manxmen—in each of them; one, the chief, a yellow-bearded, weather-beaten fellow, the very model of a sea-faring man: and there were the pupils, three in each boat, shy, half-sullen-looking natives, obviously strange to the business, and conscious of their inferiority. The Manxmen were hard at work mending a rent in the nets where one of the sharks common along that coast in summer had gone through the meshes. The other fellows looked on awkwardly, and would not take the mender's needle in hand, abashed by the others' inherited skill. It is this care of the gear that is the hardest part of the lesson to inculcate, and a generation may go by before it is fully acquired. Net-making no one needs to learn, for all nets are machine-made nowadays, but net-mending is essential. However, the Board sends round travelling instructors to the different national schools and children pick up the knack early. In a month all the boys in a school will have learnt at least the rudiments of it, and the instructor can go elsewhere.

A good deal is done in this way besides the greater enterprises. I heard of a gentleman, an enthusiast in his art, who goes round in the Board's employ preaching the gospel of bee-keeping. He travels on a bicycle, carrying a magic-lantern in little bits, and a queen bee in each

pocket ; there are even legends of his having conveyed a swarm about with him. In any case he is said to have greatly increased the output of honey, an achievement which has a sort of poetic charm about it. Moreover, while I was at Blacksod, application was made on behalf of a daughter of the lighthouse-keeper. She wanted employment as an instructress in lace and crochet work at the national school ; and this is an industry which prospers exceedingly throughout the Celtic parts of Ireland, where neat fingers seem to be part of every woman's inheritance. A clever artist once wrote an article to point out how the genius of the Celt was undoubtedly for taking pains. Larger, broader effects the Celtic art and literature have never achieved ; but intricacy of rhythm and rhyme, intricacy of twisted line and pattern, laborious accuracy of workmanship, have characterised every product of the Celt which aims at beauty. From a utilitarian point of view, however, these employments cannot compare with the rougher work. The girls who work at the fish-curing may earn up to 2s. a-day or more—and in that country 9s. a-week is labourer's wages for a man : at the lace or crochet they make at most a few pence. But in Belmullet there is a most admirable institution at work under the Board's auspices—a training school for domestic servants, with forty girls attending. Girls who emigrated from this country have hitherto gone out, scarcely knowing a tablecloth from a sheet, and probably little used to the sight of either. Now, if all else fails, they can go to what colony

they choose and find a keen demand for their services. As a matter of fact, however, when the first school of this kind was set up in Donegal, the result was that none of the girls went into service, because all of them got married off out of hand. So civilisation spreads.

But to return to fish. Looking at one of the barrels full of salt herrings on the quay, where the fish lay flat on their sides in brine, I asked if those were going to Germany, for I had heard that German markets were large purchasers. No, the manager said; if they were going to the Continent they would be packed differently—lying as they swim, so as to thicken, not flatten, the fish. And so one learnt the necessity of having a man who understood every detail of the trade. Your Finnan haddock, for instance, has to be prepared for a special market: London likes them smokier; Liverpool likes them salter; Preston, Manchester, and Sheffield each has its particular taste, which must be studied and complied with. Irish haddocks, by the way, are no use for curing, they run too big. But it is not every one who has a taste for these details, which were instilled into my mind as we ran out of Blacksod Bay and past the Island of Inishkea, a place notorious for at least one incident. On Inishkea a particular family handed down from father to son a stone called the Ne-ogue (probably part of some image), with which the owners used to make the weather to their liking. One day a party of tourists visited Inishkea, heard of the Ne-ogue, saw it, and wrote about it in the

papers. The priest in whose parish Inishkea lay either had not known of this survival of paganism, or thought that no one else knew of it; but when the thing was made public he decided to act. So he visited the island, took the Ne-ogue and broke it up into tiny fragments and scattered them to the four winds. The priest was sacro-sanct; but the islanders vowed vengeance, and an unfortunate man of science who had lived some time among them was pitched upon as certainly the person who had made the story public. This gentleman after some time returned to complete his investigations at Inishkea, and was warned of danger; but he laughed at the idea, and said the people were his very good friends, as indeed they had been. However, he was hardly out of the boat before they fell upon him and beat him so that he never completely recovered—indeed, died in consequence of his injuries some years later. Probably a like fate would befall any one who touched the cursing-stone on Tory, which was 'turned on' the Wasp gunboat after she brought a posse of bailiffs there to levy county cess; and, as every one knows, the Wasp ran on Tory and lost every soul on board. Only the other day I heard that a fish-buyer stationed there displeased the people; the owner of the stone 'turned it on him,' and a month after the buyer's wife committed suicide.

Such are the wild places into which the Board aims at carrying sweetness and, literally, light. For from Blacksod Bay we were on our way to

Inishbofin to establish for the first time an automatic beacon. Inishbofin lies fair off the mouth of Cleggan Bay, and midway in the sound is a very dangerous rock—Carrig-na-hogga. The light was so arranged as to throw a red ray over this rock; and on Cleggan Head, four miles distant, another light was being erected which should indicate in like manner another danger. With these two beacons, boats coming in by night should make Cleggan pier easily with their cargo of fish; whereas this spring one of the nobbies, smelling her way home at night, hit upon a rock and only got to port by the skin of her teeth, three parts full of water. These beacons are simply large paraffin-lamps with rotary wick, which burn for a month without any need of adjustment; and the business of filling and fitting in a new wick can be performed by a man on the spot. We went on shore and hunted out the man, who was to be paid £10 a-year for this duty—a fine, handsome upstanding fellow. He came along with us to the headland where the erection stood, and the Board's engineer explained to him the mechanism of the thing. Then began the business of filling from the barrels: it was getting late and cold, and we realised sadly that it takes a long time to pour ten gallons of paraffin through a tube no thicker than your finger. Can after can was brought up the ladder and dribbled in, while we kicked our heels on the rocks and the sun went down behind the hills, and homing gulls flew incessantly one after the other with a low, swift, purposeful flight, unlike their

usual dreamy soarings, just grazing the point and following, it was evident, a well-beaten path in the air. At last the light twinkled out: we rowed to the steamer, and after dinner got steam up to run down the sectors and see if the red slides were put in true, so as to give safety over the rocks. It was calm and clear, so we could easily test this, and by ten o'clock we were running into Cleggan with the light plainly visible five miles off, reflecting that nobody in future need run on Carrig-na-hogga unless he were set on doing so.

Next day we went back on our tracks for various errands, but our last stop showed me the most characteristic scene of all. The island of Inishturk lies about half-way between Clare and Inishbofin, and it is conspicuous by its successful resistance to every kind of payment. About once in seven years a descent is made, just to prevent the tenants from acquiring a title to the land, but otherwise they are little interfered with. And the pick of the autumn fishing-ground lies at their very doors, between them and the coast, yet Inishturk is in much the same plight as the parish whose priest complained that there was always the finest fish in the world off the coast, but the poor people had no way of catching them and the fish went away offended. However, the Board was disposed to see to it that the fish should no longer have reason to complain of the Inishturk men, and proposed to set them up for the autumn fishery—which they could work up to a certain point in their own small boats, the more

readily as they were just on the ground. So we went to see if they would take nets. But having in view their reputation in the matter of payments, it was thought well to exact cash down for half the value—say £16—of each train of nets. Accordingly, we steamed alongside—there was bold water almost to the shore—and the gig took us into the harbour, a little cleft in the rocks fenced at each entrance by a pier, built probably in the forties—for it dated from the days before concrete was used,—a really admirable piece of work in cut stone. Inside the entrance lay a lovely pool of the clearest water, with long streamers of seaweed showing at the bottom, and round it a sharply sloping ring of sand on which lay cows contentedly basking in the sun—polled cattle, too, of the Board's imported breed. On the quay was the whole male population of the island, whom we had watched assembling hurriedly; the women kept discreetly in the back-ground among the huddle of huts. The men came down the steps of the quay to greet us. At the head was the king of Inishturk, bidding us 'welcome to the island.' His courtesy was finer than his appearance, for he was an old man, shaven but not clean shaven, and his head by some stiffness in the neck was set askew on his shoulders. Thus, in order to converse full-face, he approached sidelong, like a crab, and the result was very odd. But, grotesque or not in appearance, he had as fine manners as any man need wish for; and when we expressed a wish to look round for a site for a curing-shed, a

boy was detached to show us over, but there was no flocking of inquisitive folk around us. The men stayed in their assembly on the quay-head, contented and cheerful in the sunshine, till we should choose to make our proposals. When we did so, they grouped themselves in a ring, seated ; only the old king stood up in front of the member of the Board, who made his statement. I would have given a good deal for a man able to sketch that palaver. There were about twenty of the islanders, young and old, and the distinctively Irish type more strongly marked of course in the older men. The lads mostly wore moustaches, though there was one very handsome young fellow with a square-cut yellow beard whom, if I were an owner of fishing-boats, I should like well to have in my crew. Three or four men of fifty or thereabouts were perfect examples of the western Celt —tall, sinewy, and slight, with long faces, straight nose, and this general impression of length carried out by the fashion of wearing narrow, close-cut whiskers, like two strong lines drawn down each side of the face. Some were quite old ; one charming face belonged to a man well past seventy, who sat very quietly with his hands clasped loosely on his knees, but every now and then put in a word greatly to the point.

They listened with the greatest attention to the proposals. The nets would be given to one man, who must be responsible, but he must furnish the names of a crew of three others ; payment to half the value was to be paid when the nets were

delivered, some time about September 1, and the rest of the money to be acquitted by a stoppage of a shilling on every hundred fish—to be collected by the buyer. But for the proposal to take effect there must be a guarantee that at least six boats would go to the fishing; for the Board would not establish a station, and the buyer who had undertaken to send an agent there stipulated for at least six boats to make it worth his while. There were two boats provided with nets already. Four more were wanted.

The member of the Board made his harangue sitting on the stones of the quay, with his hat on the back of his head, his hands deep in his pockets, looking extremely unofficial but extremely competent. The captain of the 'Granuaile,' correct in broadcloth and brass buttons, stood a little way off, shedding an air of responsibility over the proceedings; and close at hand was the business manager, ready to be referred to. For at first the discourse was only punctuated with civil assents—'That's thrue now'; 'Sure, no man could say fairer'—and with assurances from the king that a shilling in the hundred could easily be paid. But at the end there was a dead silence. No one liked to speak first. Then the king raised his voice in exhortation: 'Come now, boys, ye heard for yourselves. Will none of ye speak up?' It was the quiet old man who spoke up first. Were they autumn nets or spring nets? What depth were they? Others chimed in. Then the manager

came on the scene with a mass of details of measurement, and so talk began. Finally, the quiet old man put himself down, with a crew all bearing the same name. Then followed another list, all of them Tooles, dictated by the king. But there were only three names—who was the other? 'Pat Toole.' And so we learnt the name of his majesty himself. But with all this we had not four crews. Then the member of the Board explained again curtly that there must be four crews supplied or none, and that if Inishturk did not want the nets, other places did, and with that he withdrew. Then the manager took up the discussion, explaining the advantages of Inishturk's position; but still there was no one forthcoming, and we all made a diplomatic adjournment. Instantly the palaver resolved itself into an Irish-speaking Parliament; but while we English speakers were there not a word of Gaelic had passed. It was a fine trait of courtesy, I thought, to avoid a means of communication unintelligible to us. Presently a group flocked towards us, and the king began expressing his regrets: the truth was, he said, they were a poor people, and there was no cash among them. Then came a proposal from the back of the crowd. Suppose a man had not the money to pay cash down, might he have the nets and expect double the stoppages? This was contrary to the project laid down, but, after all, the object was to start the fishing. So, first of all, inquiries were made whether, if this were granted, the richer men

would still hold to the original bargain and pay on their nets. Certainly, they said, they would not stand in the way of the poorer men; and sure it was far better for a man to pay at once if he had the way of doing it. So a crew was enrolled on the other conditions, and then another crew, and the business was done. Only one hitch remained. There was no one on the island who understood net-mending except (it was believed) a boy, then in Galway, who had learnt at school. They were advised to get him back. Then came the adieux and the old king's reminiscences of the days when he had seen as many as eight hundred men, strangers, coming to Inishturk for the herring fishery. He hoped to see the like again, he said; and if those chancy creatures the herring return to the west coast as they have returned to the north, it is odds but he may. So we parted with a great exchange of civilities, and the king's last word was, that if the men did well and earned plenty of money, maybe the Board would see their way to providing a slip at the pier, where it is now very awkward to unload barrels or any heavy cargo.

That is the West all over. They have had it inculcated into them during generations that the State is a capital milch cow, and for every effort they make to help themselves they expect their grandmother to reward them with handsome donations. That is why the Board does well in leaving them as far as possible to make their own bargains with the traders, and stand, as far as may be with a half-learnt industry, on their own

legs. In this particular instance, the demand was not unreasonable; the thing is wanted, though it did not seem beyond the power of human industry for them to have sloped a run over the rocks for themselves. Still, a little concrete would do the whole thing cheaply, and no doubt it will be done. But at every point fresh demands for outlay are made, and it is often hard to find out which indicate a real need and which merely spring out of the human desire for a job. On one part of the coast in Ulster an outcry had been raised for a pier. My friend on the Board went down incognito on a bicycle; and as his appearance suggested rather some kind of dock loafer than a high official, he easily fell into talk with the fishermen. Pier, they said; yes, there was a talk being got up about a pier, but there was no call for it—the one they had did rightly. But there was a thing wanted, and badly wanted; there was no Methodist chapel in the country, and if the Government did right they would put up some kind of a tabernacle—some place a man could hang up his hat in on the Sabbath.

But, upon the whole, the Board seems to pick its way very well through these troubled waters. The priests are often a great help, and a very able priest and the ablest Roman Catholic bishop are among the most prominent members of the Board, and deal with their brethren in the Church like elder brothers. The work upon the land has to be done jointly with the Land Commission, to which all estates are made over when purchase by the

tenants begins, and the work of two bodies never runs so smoothly as that of one. But the fishery business is in the hands of the Board from start to finish, and, as I have endeavoured to show, they have excellent reason to be proud of the results they have achieved.

Many other curious details which came to my ears there is hardly room to set down; but one may summarise a few. Lobster-catching is a recognised trade; crabs are of less value, for they are apt to die in transit. But the crab is regarded as vermin, and a Connemara man is as loth to give you one or sell you one as he would be to offer a dogfish. No doubt when they learn that a good price is forthcoming they will alter their mind, as they have altered it about skate, which they export freely to London, for skate travels better than any other flatfish. It is a good fish, but in London you mostly eat it disguised as turbot; whereas, if it is called *raie au beurre noir*, it is generally cooked right, and suggests good skate, not indifferent turbot. But any man, woman, or child in Connemara would sooner starve than eat skate; they look askance even at sole; and though they eat plaice, they prefer sea-bream, which is a coarse bony creature. However, if they can sell their take, they will always be able to buy oatmeal, flour, and tea, and with these they are well contented. And every development of the big fishery helps the little also. When a regular line of communication is established for despatching great takes of mackerel, a few lobsters also can travel down it, and the flatfish that trawlers

scrape up when the weather permits them to work on that stormy coast. In short, every step that has been taken to develop the fisheries goes to raise a very large region from a state which veered in bad years between mendicancy and starvation into one of comparative prosperity. 'The potatoes is destroyed,' said one old woman to an inspector sent round in 1898 to inquire when there was a talk of famine; 'but thanks be to God, we have money out of the fishing, and we can buy meal.'

POSTSCRIPT.—A few notes may be added, to report progress. In the coming year, 1903, the Aran men, among whom the industry was started, will be completely left to the open market; the Board no longer interposes as a potential buyer at fixed rates, and they must look after themselves. But they are said to have an able and energetic adviser in Father Farragher, who was curate when the fishing started, and is now parish priest. The mackerel and other fishings now being worked are worth about £10,000 a-year to the Aran islands.

In America there has been a great local take of mackerel, and the demand for Irish mackerel in the States has diminished, but nevertheless prices range higher than ever on the Irish coast, the trade-connections being fully established. Still, last spring's fishing was unsuccessful, atmospheric or other conditions keeping the fish out of reach; and, consequently, the Board has now a number of fine boats thrown back on its hands. The industry has not yet really taken root. At Inish-

turk, for instance, the men at first did well, then badly, and the nets had to be taken from them, as the due amount was not being paid. But since then they have returned to the work with energy, and demand nets quicker than they can be supplied. At Achill, the new way of bread-winning clashed with the old, and when the season for migration to field-work in England or Scotland arrived, many men left the fishing, and several of the large boats that sailed from Achill Sound now lack crews.

Such difficulties and set-backs are bound to occur, and can to some extent be discounted. But the population can never really live by fishing until it learns to do like all true fishing folk, and follow the fish from coast to coast in larger and better-equipped vessels. Till they are so equipped the Irish will always be at a disadvantage in their own waters beside the Scotch or Manxmen.

It should be noted that of all the excellent deep-water harbours in Connaught not one has been brought into connexion with the railway system. Jealousy between the railway companies and the owners of sea communications must account for this; and unless when the railway head is accessible, no great development in the trade of a district can take place, and the fishing business must be hampered with expenses that are almost certainly fatal to it as a commercial enterprise.

A MONTH IN IRELAND

THERE is one policy, and only one, which has been pursued consistently by England in Ireland, and it certainly can point to solid results. Within fifty years emigration has reduced the inhabitants from over eight millions to four millions and a half. The success has been accomplished in the face of great difficulties, for the Irish are still indomitably prolific. Such is the result of the panacea which has been preached to the Irish by those who did not profess to love them, and still more enthusiastically by those who did. And the lesson has been mastered: every Irish peasant has it by heart, that in order to get on in the world he must go out of Ireland; he must not look for an opening at home. Individuals have benefited, no doubt, by the process of extrusion; and the Manchester School, whose policy especially favoured emigration, prided itself on legislating for the individual: the country was an abstraction which it did not care to consider. But one fact escaped the Manchester School, and the Government generally. Emigration means the departure of the fit, the remaining of the unfit.

There is something to be said, even in Ireland, for the old-fashioned view that a government should pride itself on an increase not on a decrease in the people governed ; and it would be hard to demonstrate that emigration has benefited those parts of Ireland from which emigration has chiefly taken place. What is meant by a "congested district"? For the most part, a solitude containing much land that was formerly cultivated but now is relapsing into bog or mountain. And while we see in England a population crowding more and more into great and unhealthy agglomerations of humanity, it becomes apparent that a racial type which does not feel strongly this drawing towards the towns is a type worth preserving. Can nothing be done to provide Irishmen with a career at home? Can nothing be made of an essentially food-producing country situated at the very door of the greatest market for food-stuffs that the world has ever seen?

Government has at last moved in this matter, but, as usual, not before private initiative had shamed them into action. Mr. Horace Plunkett and his friends went to work in 1890, pointing out that Ireland had natural resources equal or superior to those of countries which were driving her few products out of the English market; they preached the organisation, the co-operation, and the scientific methods of agriculture which in those other countries were inculcated and subsidised by State agencies. Then the Congested Districts Board, under the auspices of Mr. Arthur

Balfour, began its beneficent work—a work, however, confined to the least hopeful districts of the country. Then came in 1895 the Recess Committee, on Mr. Plunkett's suggestion; and finally, in 1899, the recommendations of that Committee's invaluable Report were practically embodied in the creation of a Board of Agriculture and Technical Instruction. This body has scarcely as yet begun its work, but its main business will be to do throughout the whole of Ireland what has been done in certain defined districts by the Congested Districts Board, and over a large area, but with very inadequate means, by the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society, of which Mr. Plunkett has been the moving spirit. Things are therefore only at their beginning;¹ yet, as this article is written to show, even a man on a fishing holiday can learn something of the measures that are being taken to develop the resources of his native country—measures that may in the end transform it into a land not rich indeed, but at least no longer a by-word for misery and unthrift.

I was going to fish at Carrick, near Slieve League, and the change of trains for Killybegs left me with two hours in which I could see the new creamery at Killygordon, a place in the rich valley of the Lower Finn, just on the borders of Tyrone and Donegal. I met on the station platform the president of the creamery—a landlord and a Protestant. He took me up to the

¹ Written in 1900.

building and handed me over to the secretary, the owner of a small shop at the cross-roads adjoining, whom I should guess to be a Presbyterian. These facts are worth mentioning, for it is the essence of the new movement in Ireland, that men of all creeds, religious or political, are brought together to work for a common end—which is not merely the material advantage of the members co-operating, nor the material prosperity of the country, but a harmony among classes divided by long-standing and jealously guarded hates. On a Saturday afternoon the creamery was not working, but I saw the machinery and the books: I saw also what interested me more—the secretary. This shrewd, clear-headed young shopkeeper belonged to a class from which the movement has encountered opposition. Co-operation can never be welcome to the retail trader, and the agricultural societies in which farmers combine to buy seeds, implements, and so forth from the wholesale merchants, naturally find little favour with men whose whole business is based on long and complicated accounts, involving a good deal of barter. Yet here was this young shopkeeper, not only actively concerned in a co-operative society but plainly a propagandist. In talking, he assumed instinctively the tone of a pioneer, and explained to me the difficulty there had been at first in convincing the farmers.

To begin with, they would not believe that it was physically possible to strip butter from milk fresh from the cow; then they did not see the

good of combination ; they thought it was some kind of a syndicate having for its object to drive down prices. But when after a few months they saw that every man got a good price for his milk, they began to come in, and being an intelligent class they followed the business working of the management. Books, of a model designed by the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society, are purchased, in which every fact of importance is daily registered ; the amount of milk daily taken in, the percentage of butter fat contained, the quantity of butter produced, the price paid for milk, the price realised for the butter ; then details of working, the temperature at which the milk is separated, the number of revolutions of the churn, the time given the cream to ripen, and so forth. These books, along with a minute account of incomings and outgoings, are submitted to the committee, consisting of about twenty farmers who meet monthly. Thus the men interested in the working can not only check the process, but can convince themselves that every penny of actual profit, in addition to the price received for milk, is coming into their own pockets ; and what is more, as the secretary pointed out, they receive an excellent object-lesson in the conduct of business. This educational value is from the Society's point of view the most important aspect of the creamery ; and if the book-keeping is an object-lesson, much more so is the actual process of manufacture. Nothing could better illustrate the change that has come over the world than a comparison be-

tween butter-making as it was done in our childhood and butter-making as it is carried on for the modern market. My own recollection is vivid enough of the 'byre' with its four or five cows; the dairymaid who carried in the clean pails of milk; the cool flagged dairy where the pans stood while the cream formed; and the continual splashing and dashing of the churn that sounded through the passages as the girl with her strong bare arms worked the handle up and down for maybe an hour at a time. Good butter was made in that way, none better; but also much bad. In cottages there was no dairy, and the churn was liable enough to be kept in a room where a family slept, with perhaps two or three of them breathing out the germs of consumption; or the butter, when made, might not infrequently have been stored in a press with three or four red herrings. It may explain the enthusiasm of my shopkeeper friend that every tradesman felt bound to take the butter of his customers, though in many cases all he could do with it was to send it to a biscuit factory. And, even supposing that in every case the butter was made and kept as well as could be desired, still the conditions of the modern market would call for the creamery. A merchant who deals in butter by the hundredweight cannot afford to buy by the pound from small producers. Their product, though it may be individually good, is not uniform, and time and labour are wasted in sampling and classing the lots. What comes from the creamery, whether good or bad, is at least uni-

form, and the man who orders forty boxes need only look at one to know what he is buying and what he is selling. Uniformity of output is perhaps the most essential advantage secured by the creamery in the great markets of the world, and that is the first result of organisation: but it is by no means the only one. The simple process has become an exceedingly complex and delicate one.

Go to a creamery in the morning and you will see carts coming up with tins of a special size and shape. From these the milk is tilted into the receptacle of a weighing machine, and from the milk a spoonful or so is taken as a sample, put into a bottle marked with the farmer's name and number. Then the weight of milk is entered in the passbook and ledger, and the milk is tipped from the machine into a vat. Even in this first stage care has to be exercised, for if the sample be taken from the top of milk, it contains too high a percentage of cream, and if from the bottom too little. A little boracic acid in the sample bottle preserves the samples for a fortnight till the fortnight's supply comes to be tested. The mass of the milk runs from the vat by a pipe into the separator, where the whirling of a turbine flings the heavier elements of the milk outward by centrifugal force, while the lighter cream is drawn off in a different direction. By another pipe the milk runs into a boiler, while the cream is pumped into a vat upstairs. Then comes an important stage in the process—the 'pasteurising' of the milk. In the boiler the milk is raised rapidly to

a temperature of 185° , and passes by a fresh pipe into the outer skin of a tin drum, which is corrugated in spirals. The inside of this drum is jacketed with cold water, of which a fresh supply is continually pumped in, and the milk running down the spirals along the outside of the drum is no warmer than the water by the time it falls into the tank at the bottom. This sudden raising and lowering of the temperature kills all germs, and the skim milk thus treated keeps perfectly for a week. It is run off by a further piping, and the cart going to the other side of the building receives a weight of skim milk equal to that brought in, minus the percentage deducted as cream.

In the meantime the cream pumped upstairs has been subjected to a similar heating and cooling process before it runs into the great vat, say six feet long by two in depth and breadth, where it remains to ripen for churning. But this ripening process varies from day to day, and it is desirable to produce an artificial uniformity. So we arrive at a proceeding fit to make our grandmothers turn in their graves. Into the mass of cream is introduced a preparation of lactic acid ferment in a fluid state, and this stimulates or produces the working of micro-organisms. It is all right apparently ; fermentation in wine is also the work of little beasts ; and the old philosophers who saw in the universe nothing but a universal generative process of loves and hates had a glimpse farther than they knew. But when I was shown a dairy-maid stirring up the tank of cream with a stick in

order to give the bacteria air, I thought we had indeed come a long way from the cool dairy, the dashing churn, and the milk upon which a spell might be cast so that the butter would not come, churn you never so fiercely.

The creamery's churning is done, of course, by steam-power; and steam drives also the turning-table with its roller for crushing out of the butter the last drop of moisture, while the necessary touch of salt is added. Except for this pinch of salt, which the amateur cannot detect by taste in the finished product, nothing is added to the pure butter, and it goes out in clean wooden boxes, all of one size, each containing an article perfectly uniform in quantity and quality.

On a second visit I saw the process of testing. Once a fortnight the bottle containing each man's fourteen samples is taken up and shaken, ten minims of it is drawn into a tube and mixed with eleven of sulphuric acid and one of fusel oil: then twenty-four of these tubes are spun round in a turbine, and you find in each the butter-fat formed at the top of the tube, to be read off on the scale marked on the glass. I saw two samples of milk tested, and the percentage varied so much that whereas one would only receive for his fortnight's supply $3\frac{1}{2}$ d. a gallon, the other got about four-fifths of a penny more. Thus milk is paid for according to quality as well as quantity, and the devices of a man who should have 'a bad mind,' and water his supply, would only result in his own confusion. The farmers, however, do not all

understand this process, and the man with a bad mind occasionally gives trouble as this communication, addressed to the central office of the Society, will show :—

SIR,—There was a man sending in milk, and we suspected him of watering. We had the analysis taken, and it showed twenty-five per cent. of water. We told him he should be ashamed of himself, and he came to the committee, and he knocked down two members of the committee and blacked their eyes. Sir, what are we to do ?

However, that is not a typical incident. Much more illustrative of the whole movement and its effects is the case of some people whom I have known all my life. They were buying their tea at 2s. 4d. a pound, although, as they well knew, they could get it by post for 1s. 8d. But the man with whom they dealt took their butter and eggs, and if they left him he might leave them. Now if my friend was sending his milk to the creamery, and his eggs to a depôt, he need not consider the feelings of the local dealer. And, even as things were, he benefited by the creamery, for the dealer who used to give 6d. a pound now had to go up to 8d., owing to the inducement to small farmers to join the creamery.¹

The large farmer gains by dealing with the creamery. He can have his butter made for him, and made of the right type, and pasteurised ; but

¹ I instance as typical the fact that the creamery of which I wrote in 1900 has now two 'auxiliaries'; that is, two separating plants set up in villages about six miles off, at which the cream is taken off, and then carted over to the central butter factory. Thus the area drawn upon for milk supply is trebled and a bigger business can be done.

still without the creamery he can probably get about the same price for it—though in stating that fact he always omits to allow for the labour spent in the making. But the man with two or three cows has no proper way of working, and has a very uncertain market, whereas the creamery will pay him, gallon for gallon, as much as it pays the big man, will extract as much butter from thirteen gallons as he could from eighteen, and will sell it for him at nearly 1s. instead of at 8d. a pound.

So much for creameries. But in the backward 'mountainy' parts of the country, where I was going, creameries are scarcely possible: there is no sufficient pasture. That was what an old man with a peaked and shrivelled face like a fairy's, who got into the carriage at Donegal, explained to me. Partly that, and partly, he said, the people about the Finn valley were wiser than the mountainy people. Like most of the old folk, he was distrustful of the new ideas. Spraying potatoes, he said, had done no good that year. As for land banks, he had heard of them; he, and his wife too, had heard of dépôts for the co-operative sale of eggs and poultry; but they thought the new breeds of fowl inferior to the old. Still, like every one else in the country, they had heard of, and were canvassing, the new projects; and at Killybegs, not many miles off, the projects were in operation.

There was first of all an agricultural bank—and it is to these banks the Society attaches most importance. If a man joins a creamery, he goes in

for his own advantage. If he takes a hand in the working of a land bank, he is working less for himself than for his neighbours. At Killybegs, as in most other places, the priest was the president and the schoolmaster the secretary. It was the schoolmaster with whom I spent my evening in the parlour of a comfortable inn, and he, like my shopkeeper at Killygordon, took the tone of a pioneer. The bank subsisted on a capital of £50 subscribed locally, and £50 more advanced by the Board. It is part of the Board's functions to make loans, but this function it delegates when it can, since, where there is no land bank, it may spend a considerable sum in payment of railway expenses for an investigation, in order to make a loan of £5. These hundred pounds are employed by a committee of farmers and others in small loans to known men and for known purposes. The borrower comes to the secretary and produces the names of two sureties, who must answer for it—first, that the man will repay; and secondly, that the money will be applied to a productive purpose.

Take two cases. In one a loan of £20—a most unusually large sum—was made to a road contractor. Payments were due by him, and to make them he must either borrow or else sell live stock at an unfavourable moment. The loan tided him over, and was punctually repaid. But by borrowing the man became a member of the bank, jointly responsible with every other member to the full extent of the bank's liabilities, and therefore actively interested in the repayment of every loan.

The second case is more typical. A man owning a couple of fields had sold a cow to pay his rent, and had no money with which to re-stock ; but for the bank, the grass was going to waste. He borrowed £10, paid 18s. for a pair of 'suckers,' and £8 13s. for a pair of young beasts. The pigs he sold in four months for £4 10s., the heifers he sold in ten months for £20. He then repaid his loan, which with interest at 6 per cent. made ten guineas, and was left with £14 to the good. That is an instance of what it may mean to a peasant to have the command of capital. But, as the schoolmaster was careful to tell me, in this instance the man was advised by his surety, a very shrewd farmer, both as to the purchases and as to the time of sale. The land bank was in that way a means for a neighbour to help a neighbour in a semi-public capacity. Once a-month regularly the committee of farmers tramp in to the meeting-place—the schoolhouse—and discuss the loans to be made. Some attend more regularly, some less, but the secretary told me with glee how at the annual audit he produced a record of attendances, and proposed that new men should be elected in place of those who had been slack. It was a sting, and the men touched by it instantly promised amendment and begged to be kept on : they were aroused to competition in the display of public spirit.

This is the essence of the matter, and the chief of the Society's organisers—a poet and a mystic who displays daily a practical capacity that would excite the envy of most business men—told me

that the wilder and the poorer the district the more susceptible were the people to an appeal of this kind. At one little place in Galway, an impassioned speech in Irish was delivered by a member of the committee upon the text of the yearly balance-sheet, which showed the incomings and outgoings of the various little loans minutely accounted for, with a trifling profit to the bank, and an item for working expenses that did not reach 5s. 'They say the Irish have no capacity for business!' he exclaimed—'that balance-sheet casts back the slander in their teeth.' And in a sense, although it was a big word for transactions dealing in all with a sum of £150, he was right. When the Irish can be brought to attend to their business they have a fine ability for it; and it is no easy matter to manage one of their little banks.

A fortnight later I was fishing on a grey, cold evening by the shivering reeds at the head of a lake, and another bank secretary was sitting in the bow of the boat telling me of his trials. At first there was application after application from the most hopeless cases—the men who caught at any straw—and there were people on the committee who thought of the whole as a charity. That committee was strong in one respect, for it included the priest, the rector, and the Presbyterian clergyman; but it was weak in the vital point: the farmers, who had real knowledge of every man's character and circumstances, stood out. There was little thanks to be got, so my friend told me, by standing out

for the principle that you should only help those that can help themselves: but still he stood out for it. And if he had got little good of the movement in that way, in another he had gained everything, for it had brought him in touch with the organiser I spoke of, and his eyes shone at the mention of the poet and enthusiast who had drawn out the confession of his own poetry and his own enthusiasm.

It was not in Donegal, however, that I came upon the most flourishing growths of the Society's planting. Down in Mayo, I had ridden out with rods strapped on my bicycle to fish for white trout in a little lough that lies at the foot of Nephin. As the fishing was poor, there was all the more temptation to talk generalities to the pleasant young keeper who rowed me, or rather drifted with me down the south shore, while the sun made a dazzle on the water in front of us, and away beyond the end of the lake Croagh Patrick rose, a great cone, reminding me of pleasant days in the 'Granuaile,' while I was learning what the Congested Districts Board had done for the dwellers by the sea. What did this keeper think about the Board, he who lived by the land, quite a large landholder for that district with his fifteen acres? Did he think, like one old man in Carrick, that 'the Congests were nothing at all but the ruin of the country'? Not he. It was the Board chiefly that had introduced the spraying, and if it was not for the spraying in this wet season there would not be a stalk left on the potato-fields. He

had seen one man's field green still, without ever a sign of a flower on it, but in it were two rigs where everything above ground was rotten and dead by the middle of August. What was the matter with them? The man had sprayed, but 'the stuff gave out,' and he would not be at the trouble to fetch more. Another year he would know better. What about rural banks? Yes, surely there was a bank, and a great good it had done. His own cousin was the secretary of it. Was it the Board that had started it? No, he thought it was some kind of 'committee.' He recognised the Society's name fast enough, when I told it him, but the name of the man who came round and started the bank he did not need to be told. Here, as everywhere else; the priest had addressed his people from the altar, and told them there was a gentleman that had things to say to them that they would do well to listen to, and the first work of the propaganda had been done outside the chapel—by a Catholic among Catholics for Ireland, with no taint or suspicion of any party purpose. (Are there really many Unionists who, like Mr. Horace Plunkett's dissident constituents, hold that for a Unionist to support such a movement is a touching of the accursed thing?)

Was there anything else the Board had done? Surely. All the black Galloway cattle that I saw about the country—and he showed me proudly a couple of fine beasts of his own—were come of the bulls brought in by the Board and sold or let out to farmers to stand at a small fee. Put one of

these black beasts on the mountain, along with two or three of the other kinds—kyloes or the common breed of the country—and in three months it would have gained twice as much flesh as they. Tribute where tribute is due. Sir James Musgrave at Carrick has been at work for years introducing this Galloway breed on the mountains of Donegal, where it thrives incomparably better than any other stock; and the Board has probably profited by his experiments. A little earlier in the day, when I met a very handsome little black kyloe bull on the road, I had felt more than ever convinced of the excellences of polled cattle. Tilting from a bicycle with the projecting rod seemed likely to be a poor game against these stout little horns.

The ride home was long, though my basket was no burden, and the keeper earnestly commended me on my way back to call upon the parish priest, who was greatly interested in all this work. I found him—seven miles off—in his trim thatched house, ready and willing to tell me all he could. He lived down in a village considerably nearer civilisation, and, as usual, the more backward parts of his huge parish were the more forward in the movement. Up in Glenhest, where I had fished, the people sprayed always twice, and sometimes a third time: in his own part they were apt to be content with once, and that unskilfully done, and this brought the remedy into disrepute. But his own potato patch was there for an object-lesson, even if they did not see the

mountainy men's thriving crops. The story was the same with the rural bank ; that also was more advanced in Glenhest. But even where he was, there was a bank with a capital of £250—part supplied by some religious fund of the parish, part by the Board, part by private loans, and part—an important fact—borrowed on security of the co-operative bank from one of the ordinary banks in Ballina. This £250 did not suffice to meet the demands for loans from deserving applicants. Every penny was always out in loans of under £5, and every penny was punctually repaid. No bad debts, the bank borrowing at 4 per cent. and lending at 5 ; working expenses more than covered by the difference ; capital made available to every man who had feed for a pig, or sheep, or a cow, and lacked the money to buy it : there you have the whole theory and practice of the Raiffeisen banks as they exist in thousands of parishes in prosperous little States like Wurtemberg, and by ones and twos in a few backward corners of Ireland.

And let it be emphatically stated the work of which I am now speaking had not been done by the Congested Districts Board, but by the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society. Nor was this all. The people were combining—but especially in Glenhest—to buy manures and seeds direct from the producers. The question of creameries had been raised, but set aside as the milk supply appeared too small. The project of a poultry depôt and egg-store had also been mooted, but

deferred as useless because in Ballina there was the agent of a wholesale Liverpool dealer who gave excellent prices—1s. a dozen for eggs as against 8d. to be got from the local grocer-publican. By one means or another this outlying district was being brought into touch with the great food markets; and its people were being taught, where no means existed of bringing their goods individually to these markets in the proper form, how to accomplish this by co-operation.

It should be emphasised that the main purpose of the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society has been not to create new industries but to organise and systematise the one already existing—the characteristic Irish industry of agriculture. It has done the work which, in France, Denmark, Canada, and nearly every country that can be named, is being done by a State department; and the efforts of its promoters have brought into being such a department for Ireland also. The Society spent in nine years £15,000 of subscriptions.¹ This neither can last nor ought to last. It is the business of the Department, if it does not supersede the Society, to subsidise it; and in doing so it would follow the example set in Denmark, which, of all agricultural countries, makes the most of its resources. And the Department must also do what the Society has not been able to do—it must spread technical education. As are the processes of a creamery to the dairy of

¹ In the meantime this Society is in urgent need of funds, not merely to extend but even to carry on its invaluable work.

our childhood, so are the processes of modern agriculture to farming as it is practised in Ireland. On the way from Ballina to Lough Conn the unexpected smell of flax-steeping met me twice, and I remembered the Recess Committee's report. Flax can be grown in Connaught with a larger return than in Ulster. Yet even in Ulster, where the business has always gone on, the flax produced cannot compete in Belfast with the flax grown and handled in Belgium by labour which the State has schooled. Probably the organisers of the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society have got so far as to induce Connaught farmers to give flax a trial. It is the crop which brings, with luck and good management, the highest returns. But it is also the crop which needs the most skilful treatment—and which, therefore, affords the best education,—and before flax can be really established in Connaught, technical education must be spread.

Travelling in the train from Sligo to Ballina, one was struck in the Swinford district—one of the poorest in the west—by the exceptional appearance of neatness, each field neatly finished off, with no rough edges of cultivation; ditches in good order; and by the sight, near every third or fourth cottage, of a trim shed with galvanised iron roof. Sure signs that the Board was at work, even in these fields where women were reaping, while their men earned a hard wage in England or Scotland. But the problem of migratory labour is too big to touch here.

Leaving agriculture, something must be said of the endeavour not merely to develop old industries but to implant and organise new ones. As I came up out of Glencolumbkille walking with my friend, a lame glensman, who reads the newspapers to that wild Irish-speaking community—and preaches spraying to them in season and out—I said something as to my lack of faith in cottage industries, such as knitting and weaving. He turned round, and pointing up the broad valley, dotted thickly with cottages, he said, ‘Do you see those houses? If 90 per cent. of the people were able to stay in them these last years, it was the needle that kept them there.’ The Manchester School, whom Mr. Gladstone, in a rare moment of insight, relegated to the cheerless planet, say these people would be better in America. *Solitudinem faciunt*. I do not believe that the trade in hand-knitting can continue to compete with machines. The Donegal homespunns are scarcely a commercial article as yet, though they may become so as well as the Harris tweeds; and their price is steadily rising, and so is the demand. But in Glencolumbkille the main industry is the crochet, the ‘sprigging,’ and the lace; and if these industries are a permanent standby in Belgium and on the Genoese seaboard for the women, there is no reason why they should not be in Ireland, for nowhere in the world are there defter fingers.

But the essential thing about all this newly developed industry is that the workers in these glens and mountains are now at the parting of the

ways. If they have the character to develop industrial habits, capital will come, and organise their labour. It was no advantage of situation that made Belfast, but the settlement of some Huguenot weavers. There is no reason why cotton factories should work in Lancashire, but that the hand-weavers had already the settled habit of work, more important even than their inherited skill. Already the shirt-making trade, of which Derry is the great centre, has outposts at Stranorlar, on the fringe of the mountainy parts, and if there prove to be willing workers, it will spread fast enough, for linen industries can be established with a capital outlay of £10 per worker. Woollen industries need a larger initial expense—estimated to me by an expert at £150 for every hand that is to be employed. Yet the most interesting of these experiments in Donegal deals with the woollen trade.

Mr. Morton of the famous Darvel carpet-making firm, whose factories were at work in remote parts of the Highlands, asked himself: Why should not the same be done in the West of Ireland, if a place could be found with railway and sea communication? The Board was consulted, and fell in gladly with the scheme. For a site, Killybegs was pitched upon, and the work was started in a provisional way—the Board guaranteeing a considerable sum if at the expiration of two years it seemed unprofitable to go on with it. But there was no want of workers with fingers that naturally took to the swift, deft work, and the

expiration of the two years found the firm completing a great factory. It was only newly opened when I passed through, and I was lucky enough to meet Mr. Morton himself—an employer of artistic labour with all the instincts of an artist. What struck him most was, it seemed to me, the inborn artistic sense of the Irish peasants, their manifest pleasure in watching the pattern grow on the loom, and next to that, the fact that the hills about the district were exactly fit to feed the right class of sheep and produce the right wool. So far, the sheep were not there, and for the present the wool was imported dyed. But the factory was still incomplete, and dyeing-rooms were being erected. In the end Mr. Morton's purpose was to make the people grow their own wool, spin it, dye it, and weave it into his carpets, and thus get the virtue out of the hills, and keep the folk on the ground instead of sending them to the States or elsewhere to herd in big towns.

Coming away from Carrick a week later, I went in to look at the factory, and a prettier sight it would be hard to find. There was a great room, perhaps 200 feet by 150, lit like a studio, clear, clean, with pine-boarded walls. At the farther end were the looms—nine of them—with seven or eight girls sitting in a row before each; and beyond the looms were piled the great masses of rich coloured-wool—reds, greens, blues, and browns; and on every loom rose the rich glow of the costly carpet. You would no more go there to buy cheap conveniences than you would have

gone to Morris ; on one loom a carpet was being worked for the Queen, a memento of her Irish visit, and there was at least one other in progress which seemed to me finer both in quality and design. But the beauty of the place lay in the human factor,—the rows of young girls set there, bareheaded, against this gorgeous backing. They were not Irish speakers, for all came from Killybegs or just outside it—day-workers—and though at Carrick, ten miles off, folk are curiously imperfect in their English, Killybegs is beyond the Gaelic-speaking limit. But they were of pure Irish race, as was plain enough to see, for four in every five had hair varying from the darkest brown to blue-black ; and as most of them were young lasses of sixteen—and some quite wee cutties—the hair was mostly loose down their backs or knotted with a bright ribbon. The play of life and movement that no picture can give was on the living picture as one watched them sitting still, yet ceaselessly in motion, as they talked and laughed and plied their fingers in the swift knotting of the loops, or hammered the web together. They were mostly still learners : at the end of each row was one more skilful than the rest, who directed ; but no one was yet really on the true level of a skilled worker, for the work is paid by the piece, and the most that any girl has yet earned in the week of fifty-three hours is 9s. From 6s. to 7s. 6d. would be the average ; but the wage of a labouring man in most parts of Donegal seldom goes beyond 1s. 6d. a-day. It happened to be a Saturday when I

called, and I watched the sixty workers come up, shy and smiling, to answer the roll, and take their earnings; none seemed other than content. Soon the list would be longer, for a room was being constructed for the shearing and dressing of the carpets that come from the loom, and that will mean more work.¹

In short, that factory is a centre of civilisation of the very most desirable kind. It will pay for work according to regularity and industry, but for work that is not purely mechanical and can appeal to the best instincts of the Gaelic worker. It will pay for skill; and if a talent for designing develops itself among the workers, their employers are of a nature to foster it. And, indeed, if the people of that wild country are ever to be taught in their own homes the lesson that they learn reluctantly elsewhere—‘to be for ever watching the handle of the clock,’ as the old grumbler at Carrick put it—they cannot learn it in a more civilising way. But until they have learnt that lesson, no man can be expected to risk capital in industrial enterprise among them, and it is the work of a State department to encourage capital to come there. At the beginning of things the capitalist as well as the labourer has to be subsidised; and if any think this a treason to the economic creed, let him remember that industries and arts which were for centuries

¹ This year I found that a second factory had been installed at Kilcar, six miles further along the coast, which had 150 workers, against 100 in the original branch at Killybegs; and even so the demand overtaxed them.

fostered by legislation in England and Scotland were during that same period strangled and stamped out by legislation in Ireland.

An Englishman who had spent twenty years as a clergyman in different parts of Donegal said to me this summer: 'Whatever the Irish are, they are not idlers.' But they have resources in themselves that make them strangely tolerant of poverty, and without considerable incentive they will not work more than is barely needful. What they lack most sadly is public spirit, and the faith in public spirit. And wherever a rural bank is proposed, or a poultry store, or a creamery, the belief is always held and expressed at first by the peasants that some one is engineering the scheme in order to make money out of it. And it was distressing to find very similar traits appearing in a more educated class among Mr. Horace Plunkett's ultra-Unionist constituents. Every man, the proverb says, imputes himself; and the imputations brought against Mr. Plunkett reflect upon the character of those who cannot recognise, when they see it, good work not merely designed but achieved for the service of Ireland.



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

Los Angeles

This book is DUE on the last date stamped below.

JUL 15 1988

JUL 15 1988

QL JAN 12 1987

APR 18 1988



3 1158 01146 5084

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



A 000 178 175 6

ST